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A PSALM OF THE RAIN.

BY SARAH D. HOBART.

Over the mountain wails the rain,
Moans the rain, weeps the rain,
Psalm of anguish and prayer of pain
Sighs the sorrowful rain.
Yet far below the valleys are bright,
And rippling rivulets rush to the sea,
Sweet birds sing in the silver light—
Lilies bloom on the laughing lea.

Over my life sweeps the sorrowful rain,
Solemn rain, sighing rain,
Prayer of anguish and plead of pain
I moan with the moaning rain.
Yet still I know Heaven's plains are fair,
And the soft light falls on the sea of gold;
And white wings wave in the amber air,
And the Father smiles as He smiled of old!

A WOMAN'S VOW.

BY MARY E. WOODSON.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EVIDENCE.

Tom Jones had been under the especial surveillance of the police. He had kept in his shed with singular closeness, and without any visible pretext, for the past week. Some one had found him lurking suspiciously about the railway depot on the morning of the discovery of the bloody hat, and he had been seized by Sub-inspector Kennedy.

Jones had appeared in an agony of fear and remorse, and requested to be taken before a justice of the peace, to whom alone he declared he would reveal what he knew of the singular disappearance of Mr. Tressylian.

He then declared that for months past Ralph Thornton had been urging him to join with him in robbing their master, and that for a long time he had refused.

Their scheme was at last arranged to waylay him as he sometimes went in person to receive his rents, and on his return to rob him.

That Ralph Thornton had accordingly informed him about noon, on the Saturday previous, of the errand upon which Mr. Tressylian had gone to Squire Carstairs, and had said he had purposely involved his master's business matters in such a manner that he could not possibly return until after dark.

That on the same evening Mrs. Tressylian becoming alarmed had appealed to Ralph Thornton to go in search of her husband, and that Thornton had called him at once, and the two had started together. That they had met Mr. Hartman whom Ralph Thornton was about to strike, supposing it to be their master; but that on discovering his mistake, Thornton had made a pretence of asking Mr. Hartman to turn back with them, and had hurried on lest he might consent. That immediately afterward they had heard some one coming toward them. That the person had stumbled and uttered an exclamation, and in this manner they knew it to be Mr. Tressylian. That he, Tom Jones, had been seized with a sudden compunction of conscience, and had whispered Ralph Thornton, "that he might have all the money if he would do the deed alone, and suffer him, Jones, to take a turn in the field."

That Ralph Thornton, with an oath had signified his assent, and bade him begone for a coward. He had then stepped aside from the road, being afraid to go far, and had heard Thornton knock Mr. Tressylian down, and drag him on the opposite side. That he heard his master exclaim, "Ah, rogue, will you kill me?" when unable to endure it longer, he rushed back and begged Thornton to spare the master's life. But Thornton had replied, "Peace, fool," and had strangled him. That Thornton had then jumped up, saying he had the roll of money, and they must be off.

Questioned as to what became of the money, Jones replied that he had never seen it. That they had gone a short distance, but could not tell how far, when Thornton said it would be dangerous to keep the money for the present, and that he would hide it somewhere among the furze, "until the affair had blown over." That Thornton had then darted away, and left him for a time alone, shivering with the cold and fear. That Thornton had come back saying he was sick himself, and they had gone at last to Dunleath where it had been agreed that Thornton should stop for an hour or so, while he, Jones, should keep on to old Godwyn's.

Thornton had said when the clouds broke toward morning he would hurry back, and dispose of the body by throwing it into the river, or hiding it in the furze-brake.

That he, Jones, had come on later, and had overtaken Thornton in the hollow, when the latter, looking white and sick, had whispered to him "that all was right," and they had returned in silence to Coldham.

Upon this statement Ralph Thornton had been arrested amid the wildest excitement.

A mob soon gathered with loud yells, and he was with difficulty conveyed to the constabulary barracks, where he remained, under a strong guard for the night.

On Monday his preliminary trial came off. Tom Jones repeated his statement with entire exactness, and with every indication of the sincerest repentance.

Ralph Thornton earnestly protested his innocence, and upbraided Jones for his wicked falsehood. The latter, however, obstinately adhered to his story, and retorted upon his fellow-prisoner with bitter reproaches for having urged him to the commission of so horrible a crime—declaring that he had stated nothing but the truth, and affirming that he was willing to suffer death in expiation of his share of the bloody deed.

In the meantime the strictest search was made for the body of the murdered man. The river had been already dragged, and the examination was renewed not only in its voiceless depths, but in the furze-brake, and in all the neighboring ponds and ditches. The search was in vain, no trace of the body could be found.

The spot where the hat was found was just where Thornton would have been most apt to encounter Mr. Tressylian on his return. He knew that the master was going to receive a considerable sum of money. Mr. Tressylian had left Dunleath safe and well. Thornton's absence during the whole of the night had been most suspicious. The natural thing, had he failed to meet his employer, would have been to have returned at once to Coldham.

Bail was refused, and the prisoners were taken separately to the county jail, a strong force of the police surrounding them.

On inquiry it had been ascertained that Squire James Godwyn had paid to Mr. Tressylian the sum of two thousand pounds in liquidation of a mortgage held by Tressylian on the said Godwyn's estate, on the evening of the mysterious disappearance of the former.

The regular term of the county assizes was at hand, and on the day previous to its opening £1000 in bank notes were discovered, underneath a large stone, on the edge of the brake not a hundred yards from the spot where the hat had been found, off the Dunleath road, on the Coldham land, not more than a quarter of a mile from Dunleath.

The ground which Ralph Thornton was supposed to have gone over, on the memorable night in question, had been, from day to day, the resort of hundreds of people from Coldham, the neighboring towns, and from N——, in search of the money. There was scarcely a crypt that had not been examined or a stone that had not been turned over.

During the inquiry which had now extended to thirteen days, the Dunleath road, the lead mines, and the railway line had been gone over inch by inch and carefully examined, but as neither the body nor the money had been found, the mysterious murder was becoming more than ever mysterious.

Now, however, half a dozen men, among them Lewis Hartman, had gone out from the road on the borders of the brake. Hitherto the search had not been as diligent at this point, as every one believed the money to be somewhere in the brake.

Just here a fence separated the lands of Mr. Tressylian and of Squire James Carstairs, and at the side of this fence there were a great many stones that had been taken from time to time out of the fields previous to their cultivation, and placed here.

These fields were now covered with rushes and whins. The fence was on a hill-side, and in time of floods the water would rush by it and through the passages under the stones. It was an unusual circumstance, that since the evening of Mr. Tressylian's disappearance, there had not been a single dry day at Coldham, and the heavy rains had caused floods in several parts of the country. While Hartman and his companions were passing along the side of this fence, looking into suspicious crevices, and turning over curiously-shaped stones, the attention of a man named Hood was attracted by two pieces of paper floating on a pool of water that encircled a large flat rock. He took up the bits of paper and found that they were two five-pound notes.

There was now no doubt but that the hiding-place of the money, for the possession of which a most barbarous murder had been committed, was discovered. These men consulted together, for a few seconds, as to what course they should adopt, when Hartman advised that the stone should not be removed until some of the authorities were present. Hood left the field to give information in Coldham of the discovery. On the road he met Captain Catchem, chief of the detective department, and his assistant, Rodolphus Sharpe, and told them that the money had been found.

These officers signaled to County-Inspector Wallace, who chanced to be in sight, and requested him to bear them company. Hood then conducted the party to the fence, near the furze-brake, and pointed to the stone, near which the two notes had been found. There was a cavity underneath this stone, in shape like a rabbit-hole, and out of this cavity Inspector Wallace drew a bundle of notes, which he handed to Captain Catchem, who hastened at once to Coldham, and deposited them in the bank.

A number of persons hearing of the discovery were attracted to the spot. Lewis Hartman and some of the employed workmen had succeeded in removing the stone from its bed, when young Williams called out, a few yards distant, that he had discovered another bundle of notes, which proved to be the last. This second package was likewise conveyed to the bank, and a Mr. Nicholl, the manager, counted them out. There were £1000 in all. It was concluded that a hundred pounds had been hid elsewhere, or carried off by the high water. The notes were damp in some places, but had no traces of blood.

The money was carried by an official to the house of Squire Godwyn, who at once identified it as that which he had paid to Mr. Tressylian. He remembered that one £20 note bore a particular endorsement, and had various marks which had attracted his attention while in his possession.

The intelligence spread with rapidity. The telegraph communicated to the authorities in N—— that the money had been found. A crowd assembled in front of the Coldham bank, cheering loudly, and a grim satisfaction was visible on every face. The cheers became hisses as a part of the crowd passed the Thornton house. They did not care to remember that there were only wretched and helpless women there, who could have had no hand in the murder. John Williams wagged his head at the darkened windows, and wondered "who would put on airs now?"

Dr. Chester was seen coming from the house, to which he had been called professionally, and was groaned at all the way to his hotel. If he had expressed his firm conviction that Ralph Thornton was innocent of the murder, there is no doubt but that he would have been mobbed.

Lilian Thornton's name was rung about the place—how unjustly the reader is aware.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRIAL.

The regular session of the court being at hand, the grand jury at once found a true bill, and "The Thornton murder case" was placed on docket for immediate trial.

But little additional evidence was produced, or indeed supposed to be wanting. The sheriff had been compelled to go quite a distance to secure a jury whose opinions were unformed. And but a single testimony had been given, when, to judge from their countenances, their minds were made up.

The deposition of the accomplice, Tom Jones, had been read, and Lewis Hartman was called to the witness stand. Two men were observed to give him even closer attention than the jury were manifesting. One was the prosecuting attorney, Earle Templeton, and the other was Detective Sharpe.

Lewis Hartman testified that he had met the prisoners, as both had confessed, on the Coldham side of the furze-brake on the Saturday night in question. Prisoner Thornton had told him with visible concern of Mr. Tressylian's absence, and had requested him, apparently with perfect sincerity, to turn back with him in quest of his employer, which he had declined doing, as he felt sure Mr. Tressylian was somewhere comfortably housed for the night. Prisoner's manner was most natural, and he found it difficult to believe, in spite of the evidence, that he had had a terrible murder of the character before them on his mind.

The judge reprimanded the witness sharply, requesting him to answer the questions asked him as briefly as possible, and the court would dispense with his opinions. There was but little more for him to testify, but it was observed that he had a decided tendency to favor the prisoner.

There was but one other piece of evidence necessary to be mentioned here.

A piece of gros grain blue ribbon, about an inch and a half wide, had been discovered since the preliminary trial, but a yard or so out of the road from the spot where the bloody hat and band were found. When this ribbon was brought into court the prisoner, Ralph Thornton, was observed to turn very pale; and covering his face with his hands, tears had been seen to trickle through his fingers. Being asked if he recognized it, he affirmed that it was his wife's hair ribbon, and that she had tied it jestingly about his head on the evening of Mr. Tressylian's disappearance, just as he had been summoned by the wife of the missing man to go in quest of her husband; that he had forgotten the ribbon and must have dropped it when he wandered from the road.

Tom Jones had not yet been brought into court. He had been detained in separate custody, and was now introduced by the sheriff. The prosecuting attorney finding a noose at the end of the ribbon, had had his suspicions aroused, and showing it to Jones, asked him if he had ever seen it before.

Tom Jones answered readily that he had, to his sorrow, for Ralph Thornton had showed it to him as they left Coldham, saying he intended to strangle Mr. Tressylian with it, as a shot might be heard, and any bloody weapon would testify against him if found.

Lilian Thornton in the meantime had gone into N——. She had gone from office to office beseeching the lawyers to defend her brother, who was as innocent of the murder as they themselves, and she and her mother would beggar themselves to pay for their services. She had besought a long while in vain. At last, however, a young attorney of more than average ability, touched by her beauty and her distress, had agreed to undertake the case for a hundred pounds.

The prosecuting attorney had declared that the case for the Crown had closed with the examination of the last witness.

The cross-examinations, however, continued during the second day.

Earle Templeton had returned to N—— at night, and on the morning of the third day took the care for the scene of the trial. The rigid lines about his mouth had, if possible, grown severer in expression, and the pale, intellectual face might have warned every beholder that this man was made of starner stuff than the clay and mire from which ordinary humanity is moulded. The frown on his brow deepened as the train halted for a moment at the Coldham station, but the gloom and seeming abstraction of his manner did not change.

The whistle had sounded again, when some one touched him on the sleeve.

"If you please, sir, you have the only vacant seat beside you."

The voice was a woman's—the tone, one of singular sweetness and melancholy.

Earle Templeton looked up. And the young men in that division of the car, each wishing the appeal had been made to himself, wondered that the inflexible features which they had been studying for the last half hour, did not soften or grow brighter, as his eyes rested for one brief moment on the form of the wonderful, girlish beauty before him.

The man whom she had addressed, however, glanced around, as though to gain evidence of the truth of her assertion, moved his hat and papers to the little receptacle above him, resumed his own seat, and looked out at the panoramic landscape.

The girl lifted her veil, glanced up at him with a quick start, and finally, with such fixed earnestness that the magnetism of her gaze drew his own toward her.

"If I am not mistaken, I address Mr. Templeton, the prosecuting attorney," she said, in a low, earnest tone.

"I have the misfortune to be Earle Templeton."

"Oh, sir, do you esteem the approbation of the world so lightly? You, whose rising reputation has provoked the envy of your own sex, and the admiration of mine?"

She might have designed it as a dexterously turned compliment, but if so, never did a beautiful woman more signally fail of her purpose. To her his response was cruelly pitiless.

"As is customary with women, you slander your own sex the more mercilessly of the two, I believe."

She did not, and he knew it; but it was a part of this man's new life, to forbid everything like balm to his wounded spirit. Iron-clad for his rough encounter with the world, he must be dead to all the insidious arts of flattery. He had begun, as we have before seen, by being more merciless to himself than any one had ever been toward him.

"You have some request to make of me, I see; some favor to ask," he continued, while the dark mustache fell yet lower over his mouth. "What is it?"

"Will it be possible for the court at W—— to adjourn to-day?"

The nervous eagerness of the young girl was painful in the extreme to the strangers who looked at them from the other seats.

"The Thornton murder case will probably be concluded. The arguments are fixed for to-day—and the case will be given to the jury. Whether their verdict will be ready or not, it is impossible to say."

"And what, sir, do you think will be the nature of that verdict?"

He glanced with surprise and increasing displeasure, at this pale, young girl, with such strange, wild inquisitiveness in her large, dark eyes, and such a total want, so he thought, of the usual diffidence, whether real or affected, of girls of her age.

"It is not exactly probable that my opinion would be a fair exponent of that of twelve men. It is needless for me to say."

"But, sir, you will not be hard on Ralph Thornton? He is so young; and he is not guilty, indeed he is not. You will not appeal to the passions or prejudices of those twelve ignorant men, who are often swept on to a final decision by the lashed-up froth of popular eloquence, irrespective of the underlying current of deep and earnest truth?"

"The truth, young lady, is of itself the destroying torrent that must sweep the prisoner into the eddying whirlpool of destruction below, irrespective of any impetus that I can give him."

"But, sir, I am that prisoner's sister. I have heard of your fatal gift of eloquence. Promise me at least that you will use no extraordinary effort to deprive Ralph Thornton of all the benefits of James Barrycourt's appeal in his behalf. Do not use your strength to throw him overboard at this last turning-point. Leave him the single frail spar upon which to struggle back to land once more."

"And empower him to hurl back with murderous hand to the death from which he escapes, those who would fain have saved him, as he has done before. No, I am an advocate of justice, not of mercy, and I work for the triumph of my cause as you women do for yours, only I use fair means. But content you; for though I should succeed, I promise you that in six months you will smile with the happy insouciance of your better days."

He felt no sympathy for the tie that bound all the tender emotions of Lilian Thornton's nature to the prisoner whose honor and life were at the mercy of the law. The savage part of his nature plucked up its lion courage, its tigerous ferocity, as he remembered that there was something in his power, some one whom he could hold up to public condemnation, upon whom he could visit the full force of retributive justice, with the "lex talionis" for his weapon of offence and defence.

"May the richest blessings of a God of mercy attend you if you heed my prayer," whispered the girl, eagerly. "May the bitterest curses of a broken-hearted and disgraced family pursue you through life if you refuse. Will you promise?"

"To speak as the law bids me, or perish with my perjured trust! Importune me no more. Seek mercy from the fools who fancy that to them mercy has been shown."

"Then mark me, Earle Templeton, as sure as there is a Heaven above us, and your bitter malignity, roused to fury by I know not what, triumphs over the right—as sure as Ralph Thornton, though he were truly guilty from his own misdeeds, shall be to-day held up to public condemnation as the vicarious victim of your own private wrongs, so surely shall a time come when you would move Heaven and earth to undo your own great crime, when for one word from the lips of the man you destroy, you would crawl on your knees to that felon's grave, and pour out your heart in a wild entreaty for pardon of Heaven and him."

He winced like a man under torture at her mad words—perhaps she had touched him to the quick—but he rallied in an instant, and stronger than Achilles, covered the one vulnerable point in his armor.

His harsh laugh sounded in her ear, as he rose to his feet.

"I would hang him for his impudent asseverations of innocence, in the teeth of undoubted evidence. Go, we are at the scene of action. Let Thornton's advocate do his best, as I shall do mine; and each of us will abide by the result."

CHAPTER XVI.

CONDEMNED.

The court at W——, was again startled in no ordinary degree. Tom Jones was once more brought before the bar, and with sobs and earnest adjurations to Heaven, pleaded "Not guilty."

He then made an entire recantation of his late confession; protesting that he "had been mad, and knew not what he said." He had been so startled and horrified by the murder of Mr. Tressylian, that his mind had been all upset, and he should not be held responsible for anything he had uttered. The charge he had brought against Ralph Thornton had been all a whimsical creation of his own disordered fancy, and the young man was, with himself, entirely innocent of the charge. He had not had the shadow of a foundation for any part of the indictment which he had caused to be brought against Ralph Thornton, to whom he had every reason to be grateful; and as Heaven was his witness he believed the prisoner at the bar to be as ignorant of the cause and method of Mr. Tressylian's murder, as was his honor at the bench.

The counsel for the defence declared that the court had now no just reason to detain his client in custody, and urged that a "nolle prosequi" be entered on the part of the prosecuting attorney.

The court, however, decided that the evidence against the prisoner was sufficient to warrant the continuance of the trial, and after some further production of circumstantial evidence, the arguments began.

Mr. Barrycourt dwelt upon the previous spotless character of the prisoner. There were a hundred desperadoes even in Coldham—men who were known to set the law at defiance, and yet gifted with diabolical cunning to defraud the ends of justice—who would have robbed, aye and even murdered, Mr. Tressylian for a hundredth part of the sum of money the unfortunate gentleman was known to have had about him on the evening of the murder; and even the

LILIAN THORNTON'S VOW.

"SHE HAD DRAWN ASIDE A VEIL THAT HAD ENVELOPED HER HEAD, AND TURNED TOWARD HIM A FACE OF STATUESQUE BEAUTY, WITH EYES THAT GLITTERED UNTIL THEY SEEMED LIKE A TRANSPARENCY BEFORE A BURNING LIGHT."

bitterest personal enemies of Ralph Thornton would never have dreamed of associating him with the most venial violation of the decalogue, unless the evidence against every conviction of their souls should be overwhelming in the extreme; but when that charge was murder, wilful and malicious murder, the murder of a man who had been more than a father to the prisoner, because the laws of nature had not imposed the duties of a parent or the affinities of kindred blood; though the evidence should be to the last degree damning, there were men who had known the prisoner best, who must and would, in spite of any and every combination of circumstances, believe in his innocence to the last. But when the evidence rested entirely upon the whimsical phantasms of a madman's confused brain, the charge might be weighed by a jury of lunatics, but could never surely be gravely considered by twelve intelligent gentlemen.

All eyes were turned upon Earle Templeton as he rose to his feet. His deep voice, as distinct in its enunciation as the notes of a clarion, echoed through the lofty dome.

If this were the first occasion on which blood-stained wretches had pleaded insanity as an excuse for monstrous crimes, the jury of gentlemen before him might indeed carefully reweigh the evidence ere they returned a verdict; but such shallow stratagems of a guilty conscience, terrified by the fearful penalty of the law, had become so natural a sequence of crimes that it was looked for as a matter of course. Numbers of men could be found to testify to the unreliability of the prisoner, Tom Jones, but not the slightest suspicion of a disordered intellect had ever been awakened amongst his most intimate associates. No, Carroll Tressylian had been murdered, and, revolting as was the thought, by the man he had so trusted; the man who stood before them arraigned by the confession of his accomplice for the monstrous deed.

The crowd in the hall of justice had grown denser and denser, until an upturned sea of human faces, curious, eager, intense, looked toward the judges' seat, and the young and graceful speaker—the thunder of whose voice and the livid lightning of whose words held them bound as with a spell of weird mesmerism. The cheeks of young men, whose impassioned fancies were the easier caught and transported by the speaker's eloquence, burned as with a consuming fire; and old men shook their heads as though inspired anew by the majesty of the legal Nemesis.

They had heard the evidence—a closely-connected story of positive crime with the palpable motive, and if ever a case called for the prompt and severe action of the law, it was the one before them.

Alas, they had seen how the gifted but unfortunate victim to the wiles of an assassin had left his beautiful home and bride, never more to return or to look upon the light of another day. They had been told by the actual confession of his terrified accomplice, how he had been murdered by the wretch to whom he had fully confided the nature of the journey upon which he had gone; how with the savage treachery of all utterly debased natures, he had selected the occasion on which he had been most trusted, amid the darkness of night and storm, as a time best suited to his purpose. He could not dwell upon the revolting details again; the waiting of the murderers on the lonely road for the man drawing near to his awful doom—the final assault—the robbery—so clearly proved, and the careful hiding of the murdered man's body! With the charge of the judge and the evidence before them, he left the prisoner in the hands of a jury, and bade them to open the doors of the sanctuary where the man-slayer finds refuge, to this monster, if they dared.

This is a simple synopsis of the speaker's argument. In what language it was couched, with what incontestible dogmas of the law it was pointed, in all of which Earle Templeton seemed to-day an oracle with the stamp of offended deity about him, Heaven knows our inability to relate.

The jurors sat during the two hours' discourse, like twelve pieces of statuary; the light of each eye—transparent index of the soul—and the mobile expression of each countenance, alone telling that they were men of reasoning faculties, swept on in spite of themselves by the young attorney's invincible demonstrations.

The counsel for the defence now rose to reply.

He reminded the jury of the previous spotless reputation of the prisoner at the bar, of his universal Christian charity and philanthropy, irreconcilable even with homicide, unless under the severest provocation.

The murder of Carroll Tressylian was surrounded with a midnight of mystery that could never be cleared but before the high tribunal of God. That he had been murdered—murdered under circumstances of the most revolting cruelty the evidence might demonstrate. He was not prepared to point to the perpetrator of the deed. His duty was to show that his client was, despite the deposition of Jones, who deserved to be branded for all time as a second Titus Oates, as free from all participation in the heinous crime as was his honor on the bench.

The murderer, whoever he might be, had accomplished his fearful work, and had vanished again with the burden of a secret known only to himself and God. He dwelt upon the touching affection of the sister and wife of the prisoner; an affection which nature would have risen up to condemn had they bestowed it upon "a monster of so frightful mien" as the prosecuting attorney would represent the unfortunate young man before them. The wife, now thought to be dying, still declared her unshaken belief in his innocence. The sister waited outside the portals of the hall of justice asking simply for justice.

The jury were visibly impressed by the speaker's earnest eloquence, and the astute lawyer followed up his advantage by reminders of men unjustly punished, poured forth in volcanic bursts of fiery emotion, and in closing his argument he sternly claimed every reasonable doubt for the prisoner.

There was an expression of hope on the faces of the accused and his friends, as the learned counsel took his seat; and even the most prejudiced of his accusers, under the immediate influence of the speaker's fervent appeal, began to ask themselves with a secret misgiving, "What, if after all, he should be innocent?"

There was a moment of silence, and Earle Templeton rose for the last time.

He began with a meteoric shower of criticism upon the argument of the counsel for the defence.

The fall of a human soul, he argued, was as often the result of a single thrust, as of a continued siege by the powers of evil. The raw recruit was more easily captured than the armed veteran.

Who talked the flashy, trashy gammon of spurious displays of feeling to-day being the gauge of secret action to-morrow? Every schoolboy had read of a Nero, now weeping passionately that he had ever learned the art of writing, since he was required to give his signature to a death-warrant; and anon becoming the amateur butcher of his best subjects. Or of a Catherine de Medici at one hour poisoning a Prince of Condé; at another, engaged in the rigorous exercises of her devotion; and the next, planning to-morrow's massacre of St. Bartholomew.

"The benefit of a doubt!" In the name of justice was there a point in the evidence where the shadow of a doubt could rest? This was not alone a case of circumstantial testimony, though that would be sufficient for conviction. The "still, small voice" of conscience had refused to be silenced in the bosom of the rude and uncultivated accomplice, and that accomplice only asking for pardon of God, had resigned himself to the laws of his country, and was awaiting their execution as the just atonement of his horrible crime. He would now finally commit the case to the jury, feeling confident that the blood of Carroll Tressylian would no longer cry in vain for vengeance.

The charge to the jury broke the universal hush, after Templeton had resumed his seat, when without leaving their box, the foreman, with a stern face, returned the verdict—

"Guilty of wilful murder."

The attorney for the commonwealth alone of the vast audience seemed unmoved. Yet the minds of the people could not at once comprehend the horrible reality.

They saw as in a dream the black cap crowning the stern brow of the judge; beheld a pale-faced young man standing to hear his doom—caught the expressions of the "sentence"—that the condemned "should be remanded to the county jail, therein to be confined until taken therefrom by the sheriff, on Friday, the 31st day of January, 18—, at 12 M., to the usual place of execution; then and there to be hung by the neck until he was dead, dead, dead!" and when the prisoner was taken out before them, began to disperse with the air of men who are not certain but that they are just being awakened from a trance.

The red disc of the sun had disappeared from the sky, and the stillness of death had fallen upon the court, the jail and the tavern, as Earle Templeton came forth to make his way to the cars that were to bear him again to the great city with its eternal roar, but a few miles off.

Not a breath rustled among the withered leaves overhead, as he walked rapidly on with his green bag under his arm.

The stars peeping through the branches here and there were looking coldly down upon him, when he felt a touch upon his arm and turned brusquely.

It was a woman; but his face lost none of its sternness.

"What do you want?"

"I have waited patiently for you, Earle Templeton."

"Who are you?"

"It is I."

She had drawn aside a veil that had enveloped her head, and turned toward him a face of statuesque beauty, with eyes that glittered until they seemed like a transparency before a burning light.

"Be brief. I hear the cars coming. What do you want?" Not a note of his deep voice had changed.

"You do not know me?"

"No! How should I?"

"I am his sister."

"Whose sister? I am in no humor for riddles."

"If you can think of any one else to-day, you are worse than I thought you. Does not your conscience tell you now?"

"No."

"I am Ralph Thornton's sister."

"Well!"

The tone was cold and hard. There was no shadow of pity in his eye—no relaxed muscle about the stern mouth.

"'Well!' Man, she is dying."

"She? You are too prolix. Who is dying?"

"Ralph's young wife."

"Then," replied Templeton, through his set teeth, "he is guilty of a double murder, as I have said; the last even worse than the first—the murder of the only woman I have ever heard of who deserved to live—a woman with an unwomanly nature, that is, with a heart."

"Did you ever have a mother?"

She looked up at him curiously, in spite of the cruel sorrow that seemed to be paralyzing all her nature.

"Ah! Name her not. She died before I could be taught to blush for her." And there was a momentary tremor in his voice; but it was a single scintillation struck from a flint, gone in an instant, leaving the hard, rude substance—as before.

"Then I tell you, unnatural son, that you have broken the heart of his and my mother. She will never live to see him die."

"Pshaw! you would persuade me that hearts are as numberless as the leaves of Vallambrosa—that you all have them."

"Monster! What fiend has possessed you? To-day even I had a momentary thrill of compassion for you, as I fancied that some grief, terrible as mine, had so metamorphosed what should have been a man. But to-night, I invoke God's curses on you."

"The natural mutability of your sex, Miss Thornton. Did you stop me to tell me that. I see the train coming!"

"I did not. Do you remember my threat?"

"Threat! ha, ha! No. The cars are coming."

"Earle Templeton, can you guess why I did not kill you with this pistol as you came up just now?"

"Because the picture of death on the gallows, called especially to your remembrance by the circumstances of to-day, had not been a pleasant one, I suppose," he replied, with a gruff laugh.

"No, Earle Templeton. No. It was to give you fair warning—to save you for a sweeter revenge—to make you curse me, in the time to come, that I did not take vengeance on you to-night, and thus spare you a remorse like that of Cain. For you shall be cursed—cursed in every relation of life where you would vainly look for comfort; cursed in the house and in the street, by bed and by board, under the sun and under the stars. The train is here. Now go."

"I never doubt the will of a woman to compass the ruin of a man; fortunately the power is often wanting. I believe I must leave you. Good-night."

"'Good, good night.' Mark it through life as a night of all evil for you and me. The cars have stopped. Go quickly—for the love of God, go, or I may thwart the destiny that I have seen before us to-night, by killing you here and now."

The flaming eyes of the engine looked at him through the darkness. He sprang forward, entered the nearest coach, and sank into a seat, just as the long train flew away.

He could not banish all thoughts of this mad woman—as he believed her—from his mind at once. He smiled in ridicule as he fancied the convulsed machinery crying out—

"Going quickly! Going quickly! Going quickly!"

A moment later, however, looking up at the heavens—wrapt in gloomy thought—he had ceased to remember his sibyl of the woods. But to Lilian Thornton's ears, as she stood alone under the trees, the voice of the swaying engine chanted this chorus—

"I shall catch you! I shall catch you! I shall catch you! I shall catch you!" until it died away in the distance, when she turned back toward the gloomy old tavern, saying, simply—

"I can wait!"

CHAPTER XVII.

JANUARY 31.

The Christmas holidays had passed quietly enough at Colobam.

The memory of that recent ghastly tragedy seemed still to brood with threatenings of evil over all the place. No gun was fired—not a voice was lifted in merry-making. The adults passed to and fro from their places of business, as though life were all a tread-mill, whereon no diversions could by chance creep in among the duties of life; and the children shrank by as though ever corner and shadowy place still bristled with ghostly phantoms of its own.

Mrs. Tressylian, attended by the best physicians from London, lay ill in the grand, solitary house of her murdered husband. Earle Templeton had passed the threshold twice—each time attended by a learned counsellor at law—in the discharge of a duty toward the deceased, which he could not depute to another; and that ended, he had returned as promptly to N——.

Mary Thornton—the young bride of the condemned murderer—lay dying, as every one had heard, in the cottage of her husband's mother; but if she had any sympathy at all, it was in the general comment, "Poor thing! it is better so."

George Chester came and went there—the only individual that passed those doors without a protest, bearing his own troubles in his own old, grand, heroic way; putting the tender thoughtfulness for others ever foremost, yet wondering most of all and pained beyond all words to tell, at the terrible, mysterious, unaccountable change in her who held all the issues of life or death for him.

Lilian Thornton had not had one hour of sickness since the day of her brother's condemnation. She had nursed her mother through the wild delirium of a brain fever, and was now constantly to be found at the bedside of her brother's wife.

"If we could only arouse her," said Dr. Chester. "If we could whisper the faintest hope to her broken heart, there might be a chance for her life; but with that spectre of a gibbet before her, she must die."

"God has not then forsaken her," cried the desolate mother, overbearing. "Oh, if he could only die a death less horrible!"

George Chester turned as though he had received a stab in the back; there was, for a moment, a strange, unnatural, white look about the closely-compressed lips.

Mary Thornton had not spoken an intelligible word for the past three days. Only a low, disconsolate moan escaping now and then from her lips, broke the stillness of the sick room. Dr. Chester had been holding her pulse for an hour, when the bell rang out the dinner hour at the hotel across the way. He laid the thin, motionless hand upon the pillow, and slipped noiselessly out at the door.

"George!" Lilian Thornton had followed him out, and now stood at his side. Quite impassively she had laid her hand upon his arm. "George, do that, for my sake."

"Oh, Lily, my love, my darling! did you read our secret in my face? Yet I would never have it wear a disguise from you."

"Does he wish it?"

"Yes. At least, Lilian, I cannot tell. But you must not utterly despair. Promise me that you will not."

"Despair! Is there room for it still, do you think? Oh, George Chester, I have loved you, but this day must part us, and part us forever!"

"Hush!" he cried, as though the mere thought were worse than death. "Nothing in this life shall ever part us. Public disgrace, when unmerited, is but the stronger bond of sympathy and love between devoted hearts. Not all the executions of law, or brands of holy church, could weigh with me, but to strengthen my love, while I know you as you are. Oh, my Lily, my love! if I could see you smile once more, as when you first drew me to you with a spell that death itself cannot break!"

She scarcely heard him at all. Certainly his words took no hold upon her heart or mind. God pity her if they did, for the desolation, born of her present despair, which she was to bring upon his future life and her own. There was now no gleam of tenderness in lip or eye. She seemed, like Niobe, to have wept herself to stone; not a muscle of her statuesque face quivered with a breath of emotion. It was only when he had taken her hand, and would have drawn her toward him, that she drew away abruptly, and said, in a voice from which all the music had died:

"Forbear, or I shall despise you! I would not have my heart softened toward any human thing to-day. If I could feel one impulse of tenderness, I should deserve my fate."

She had not looked up at him once; and now that she had ceased speaking, she turned abruptly away, and passing into the nearest room, closed the door behind her.

George Chester passed out in the open air and down the street. The snow was falling again heavily, heavily, wrapping everything as in a winding-sheet. He took off his hat and bared his brow to the icy kiss of the fast falling flakes. He did not notice that other men were plucking up their fur collars, and diving their chins into their bosoms. His own temples were throbbing violently, and his cheeks flushed as with a fever. He ran his fingers impetuously through his curling hair, and looked up at the lowering clouds.

"What a sympathy there is from the first to the last of all God's creations," he thought. "Storms in the outer and inner life of man; and then the smile of God seems withdrawn from us forever. But just beyond those clouds, my philosophy tells me, there is a silver lining; and, after a little, I must still believe the sun will break again."

Brave, hopeful heart! And yet the shadows were gathering about his pathway, never more to be dispelled.

"I can't understand her," he mused again. "If she would go into a passion of weeping, as her mother so often does; if she were ill, like Mary—would go off into spasms—anything but this fearful, unbroken, dead-sea calm, I might tell what is to become of her. But to-morrow will show me, I suppose."

He shivered slightly, and replaced his hat as he breathed that one word, "To-morrow."

Oh if he could have known. If he could have known!

He passed into the hotel and mechanically partook of dinner. Then he came out, waited for the train and jumping on, rode to W—— and seeking the jailer, visited Ralph Thornton in his cell. Remaining with him perhaps an hour, he returned to Coldbam again, and to his post at Mary Thornton's side.

Ralph Thornton's mother came in, and threw herself prone upon the floor before him.

"Oh, George Chester, tell me, or I shall go mad. My son has nothing to confess, and is prepared to die."

"His hands as we know are as stainless as our own. I left the Rev. Mr. Withers with him. God grant that when my time comes I may be as resigned and prepared as he is."

The reader might find consolation in these words; the mother could not. She saw nothing, thought of nothing but the fearful death that awaited her son on the morrow. The future was buried out of sight in the blackness of the present. He lifted her up, but did not attempt to comfort her; and there through the night she sat rocking to and fro, and moaning with a despair that caused the tears he would not attempt to repress, to trickle down his cheeks.

Cold and calm and wakeful as Argus, Lilian bent over her sister's couch. Mary Thornton had been sleeping so soundly for some hours, that Dr. Chester now lifted her head in uncertainty as to whether life were extinct or not. As he gently lowered the pillow again, she opened her eyes, and looked at him with a ray of intelligence. He bent eagerly over her and noticed that her lips labored for a moment ineffectually to speak; then faint as the sighing of vernal zephyrs came the words to his ear alone, for his ear was at her lips.

"Dear brother, is it over?" and the next instant she was unconscious again.

"Lilian," said Dr. Chester, excitedly, "you and your mother must retire, and leave me alone with Mary, if you would have me save her life. I have something to say to her. For God's sake go!"

"Would you call her back?" cried Lilian, angrily. "She would ask no greater boon than to go before him. Think, if you can, what returning life and consciousness must bring to her."

"I know, I know," he answered, hurriedly. "But Lily, it is his wish. His last words to me this evening were, 'Save her and I shall bless you even in the grave.'"

"Come then, mother," she raised no farther objection, but taking her mother by the hand, led her quietly into the adjoining room.

"Could she ever feel so deeply for lover or husband as she does for Ralph. I wonder," thought Dr. Chester, and with a sigh he again bowed his ear to his patient's mouth, and listened for her breathing. There was perceptible respiration in the motions of her chest, and once more lifting her head he touched her lips with the stimulants and succeeded in making her swallow it.

"Now for the battle of life or death," he muttered. "The closing contest has come. Half an hour will decide."

Grim death, ghastly death seemed to the solitary watcher to be in the room everywhere—chilling the fire, paling the lamp, in the ticking of the clock upon the mantel, croaking with the cricket upon the hearth, "She is mine!" "She is mine!"

The angel of life seemed fading quite away. Was the contest indeed over? She lay so hushed and still.

The cock crew thrice without, but the cricket had hushed its notes within. Lance to lance the great competitors stood, and as we all know death must in the end be the greater. Ever so faintly the dawn broke in the east. The sun of life would soon shine upon the earth, and now too, in God's mercy, the soul of life rebreathed into the woman. A shiver passed over her frame and she looked up.

"Is it over, George?"

"Oh, thank God, Mary. Can you hear me?"

"Yes."

"Do you know what you are saying?"

"Yes."

"Who is it that is threatened?"

"Ralph."

"And you remember with what?"

"Death, such an awful death."

"Mary, I have a message from him—something to tell you—something of hope. Can you hear it?"

"All my soul is listening."

"And you will remember it, though you should wake and not find me here."

"I will bear it with me to the portals of eternity."

"Bear it rather into life here. Mary, Mary, Ralph is talking to you, through me."

"Oh, my love, my husband, I listen!"

Dr. Chester bent over her, and whispered in her ear. She lifted one hand with a feeble cry, and clasped him about the neck.

"Tell me again, I am sinking."

"First, the cordial," he placed the glass to her lips and forced her to swallow, once, twice. Then, as she seemed sinking, he called her by name, and whispered once more.

She caught his hand this time with a vigor that astonished him. "Must I, oh, must I hope that?"

"We can do nothing else," he answered. "And now, Mary, lest you should fall asleep and wake again when I am not here, and think it but a dream, see, I place upon your finger the ring you asked Ralph to wear on the day you married him, and which bears upon the seal the image of Hope. You will look at that and believe."

"Yes."

"You are quite sure you know what I have been saying?"

"Yes! oh, yes! I would cherish that in a mad house, or even in the grave."

"Then repeat it to me. Stop! whisper softly."

She did whisper, word for word, what he had said.

"Then you are safe. Drink this."

He poured out another draught and held it to her lips. She drank again, and he lowered her pillow once more.

"That will keep her, and the others we must commit to God's mercy."

He walked to the next door, and after a moment's hesitation looked in. Mother and daughter were lying upon the bed, clasped in each other's arms, and both, in the last extremity of exhaustion, were asleep.

"If I only dared! Oh, if I only dared!" he muttered. "But no. I am bound by an oath so solemn, that it would deserve to fail of success could I violate it."

Returning to the bedside of his patient, he found her breathing tranquilly in deep sleep.

"God have mercy upon them!" whispered the doctor, softly. And let us repeat it, reader, "God have mercy upon them;" for this was the dawn of the day upon which Ralph Thornton was to suffer the penalty of the law, and be hung for the murder of Carroll Tressylian.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 16.)

A HIDDEN WRONG;

or,

Too Trusting and Too Fair.

BY MRS. ELIZABETH MORRISON.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MOLLY PAYS HER DEBTS.

Old Bonbette was too weak and ill to be the object of much consideration to the wily Rosetta, though, to do her justice, she watched him kindly, and gave him his medicines as carefully as if she believed in their efficacy to restore him.

"But old master's gone up sure," thought she, "and dis old woman has got to look out for de future, and see dat she's to be took care of somehow."

With this end in view the old plotter arranged many strings to her bow, and one of the latest was that gay and dashing gentleman, Mr. Ralph Velour, who chanced to be talking to her the evening after the meeting of Eugene and Dr. Heatherton.

Mr. Velour was scarcely his cool, audacious self on this occasion, and Rosetta was sorely tried by his suspicious and dissatisfied conduct.

The place of their interview was the small and empty back room of the house next door to Soubette's, which was tenantless at that time, and they had gained access to this apartment by a gate communicating between the yards of the houses.

A small table, lighted by a single lamp, stood between them, and the man was seated on a common painted chair, leaving another for some expected guest. The woman stood by the back of it, moving her hands nervously up and down the wooden rounds, and watching Ralph's face with furtive anxiety.

"I've jest been thinking, Rosetta, that you may be playing me some infernal trick in this business," Ralph muttered, suspiciously, "and so I want to give you warning."

"Laws, honey, you ain't done nothing else but give me warnings ever since we spoke about dis business," Rosetta said, trying to grin, as if she felt perfectly at ease on the subject, but looking secretly at the pistol he had taken from his bosom and laid on the table beside him. "I saw you kind of dodging round here, as if you'd like to hear something of your old friends, and so I speaks to you, and you 'pears mighty glad to find old Rosa willing to give you a little news about de folkses."

"Yes, yes; I had a question or two to ask, and for your own sake I hope you answered me truly. I confessed to you that I was after the paper contained in the locket that the elder De Courcy gave Nina Soubette to keep for his boy, and I asked you if you knew anything about it. You said that Nina had lost it in some way, which is really true. Shall I tell you how I found it out?"

"Laws, yes. I likes to hear all de news, Master Ralph."

"Well, then, I wrote her, saying that I had found such a paper. Of course I disguised my hand, so that she couldn't guess it if she tried, and offered to meet her at the lower side of Lexington Square and deliver it to her for a good reward."

"Yah, ha! how you must like to lie, Master Ralph, 'cause of course it was a lie."

"Of course it was. I wanted to test the fact of her having lost it, and I did. I hid myself, and she came to the moment with her purse in her hand, and a look of genuine trouble in her eyes. I watched her from my place of concealment, and I don't believe she enjoys her splendor much."

"Well, you is real hardhearted, to bother her jis for nothing."

Without paying the least attention to this accusation, Ralph went on to say—

"You delivered my letter to Miss Marian Barton at the store, informing her that she should see her sister here to-night, and received from her an assurance that she would be here at eight?"

"Yes, Master Ralph, dat's sure."

"And you have promised to help me in whatever course I decide on as the best to pursue in regard to her?"

Rosetta nodded her head vigorously, but seemed too much excited to be very intelligible when she spoke.

"I hope to de Lord dar won't be no shedding of blood, dat's what I hopes, and I've tried to do for de best. I don't care how it turns out, now dat's a fact."

She appeared to make this protest of good intentions for the relief of her own mind. Ralph paid no regard to it, except to laugh at her fears.

"What do you suppose I want of a girl's body on my hand?" he inquired, sharply. "I've no time to spend getting rid of such a thing. All I want is to know what she did with the locket-paper, and get it from her quietly, if I can; but if I am forced to it, with the harshest and loudest measures. You know how to talk to these girls, Rosie, and you can keep her still if you will, so that I can get her to give me all the information I need."

"Yes, Master Ralph, I'll be sure to manage first-rate," Rosetta said, trying to hide a nervous quaver in her voice by an affected cheerfulness.

A light knock at the outer door sounded distinctly through the empty house.

The man jumped up, and caught Rosetta's arm warningly.

"Hush!" he whispered; "remember, we're to try the mildest dodge first; speak smooth, and let her suspect nothing."

Not trusting herself to reply in words, Rosetta had recourse to a renewed series of nods, and being freed from the man's rather severe grasp, went out rubbing her arm, and muttering under her breath.

She had lighted a candle at the lamp on the table, and closing the door of the room in which she left Ralph, she hurried through the narrow entry and set the outer door wide open.

A breathless girl stood there, pressing her hand on her heart, and almost voiceless with hurry and excitement as she tried to say—

"I went to see my sister—that is, I was to come here to meet a gentleman, a Mr. Velour, my sister and brother-in-law's friend, who was to—"

"Yes, dat's all right, miss. You jis walk right in, and don't be afeard of nothing," Rosetta said, meantime motioning with her hand to some one who appeared for a moment behind Marian, then shrank hastily out of sight in the shadows of the darkness outside.

"Where shall I go?" Marian asked, with no abatement of her intense eagerness. "He said they were staying in this plain, out-of-the-way place, but to-night they were to be received in their own home, and that I was to accompany them there. Oh, how glad I am, for my dear Sister Lucy's sake!"

"Certain you are, miss, and you must jis be a little patient, and all will be right."

Rosetta stood back against the wall, and motioned for Marian to pass her, pointing to the door of the room where Ralph awaited her.

The girl obeyed. She saw her enter, and heard his honeyed tones in greeting, and then she put her head out into the darkness, shading her light with her hand, and calling softly—

"Miss Molly, whar are you?"

The figure, wrapped in some loose drapery, that had appeared behind Marian, came again into view, and stood as still as death before her.

"Dere both in de little room now, honey," Rosetta said in trembling tones, "and I want you to promise me you won't do nothing scary, 'cause I find I'm getting old and easy frightened. Oh, lordy, I'm trembling most to death this minute."

Without uttering a word the tall woman's figure passed her, and moving without a sound, glided forward until it was lost from sight in the shadows. A gust of wind blew out Rosetta's light and slammed the door, just as Ralph's voice summoned her from the back room.

"I'm coming, master," she rejoined; "I'm in de dark here, so I can't be so mighty quick."

She felt about with her hands for Molly, but she had apparently disappeared up the stairway, or into the other room, though not a sound had been made by her in passing.

When the old woman reached the light, her eyes were blinded for a moment, but she soon saw that Marian was standing, in spite of Ralph's entreaty that she should be seated, and that she looked less expectant and pleasurably excited than when she had appeared at the doorway.

"I think I must have misunderstood you; I am afraid I have been too hasty, too credulous," she was saying, while her eyes wandered with increasing doubt and fear around the empty and desolate looking room.

"Sit down, my dear; pray let us be perfectly frank with each other," Ralph answered with his wickedest smile; "there is something in your mind that you do not like to utter. Put it in words, my pretty Marian, and it will help to make us understand each other."

"I came to see my sister," repeated Marian, in a tone of trembling bewilderment. "You gave me proof of her presence I could no longer doubt, and, oh, I was so ready, so very ready, to believe. Is it not so? Can you have been so cruel, so meanly, wickedly cruel as to deceive me? Oh, it is impossible! I will not believe so badly of any human creature!"

Still she moved backward toward the door, as if the doubt, terrible as it was, was fast becoming certainty, and the facts that crowded upon her terrified observation, strengthened the unhappy truth.

"This is no occupied house, and this old woman does not believe what she has told me—I can see it by her face—and you, too, smile at me in a manner that chills my blood. Oh, let me go! I will not stay; I see it all—I am in a trap!"

She screamed wildly as he approached her, and wrenched the door open with all her force, as she tried to flee from his threatened grasp, but his strong hand was upon her, and his wicked, determined eyes looked into hers.

"You've made me come out in my own colors," he said, hoarsely, "and now you shall know the whole truth, and, by Heaven, I warn you not to trifle with it, or me! I want the paper you took out of that French locket you wore, and I will have it, if I have to tear your heart out to get it. Stop your cries, or I'll choke you. I've done fooling now; this is dead earnest; tell me where you have hidden that paper, and save yourself and me trouble that will be hard to undo."

He held her arms with a clutch like a vice, and glared into her face as he spoke, with the light of his evil passions flaming in his shallow eyes.

"I know you now," she cried out in increased terror. "Oh, I know you now! You are the wretch who knocked me down and stole my sister's locket from my pocket. Let me go, you cruel ruffian, let me go, or I will alarm the whole street with my cries for help!"

Throwing all her strength into one desperate though futile effort, she writhed herself free from one of his hands, and tried to tear off the grasp of the other, while she raised an intense and piercing shriek for aid.

"Help! Help!"

The first sound was stifled by a sharp and pitiless blow, and the second died away in a low, agonized moan of pain, for with a horrible imprecation the villain struck her full on her shuddering breast, and she dropped beneath the blow like a dead thing, and lay senseless at his feet.

A singular cry from the lips of old Rosetta broke the instant's silence that followed the heavy fall of the girl's figure on the floor. It expressed horror at once for what was done, and dread of what was coming. With her hands outstretched and her eyes dilated, she screamed:

"Oh, Master Ralph, your time's come; you fetched it on yourself by your wicked deeds, and you can't blame nobody!"

His time had come! Yes, truly, a swift Nemesis seemed to spring from the very earth at his feet, where lay the still and silent witness against his last deed of treachery and violence, and the form of Molly Dance, wielding a long, slender knife in her hand, rose for an instant above the cowering and astounded ruffian, the next the blade was buried deep in his black and remorseless heart.

Rosetta's cry had roused him from the fiendish contemplation of Marian's prostrate form; he had seen one glimpse of her he had wronged, armed for vengeance, and had uttered her name in craven terror—

"Molly!"

With that sound on his lips he died; his evil deeds were numbered—his time had truly come.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

NEW-OLD FRIENDS.

In a very splendid and capacious library, in one of the finest of up-town mansions, sat Eugene and his friend, Dr. Heatherton, in the presence of Judge Lester, the master of the establishment.

It was late in the evening, on the night of the tragic incident in the empty house, next to Soubette's, the Frenchman; and the gentlemen were talking very gravely and earnestly together, on a subject of strong interest to all three.

They had come up from the dining-room some hours before, and the papers and documents that covered the great library-table, showed their conversation to have had some relation to legal business.

"You will see by these deeds and schedules that Mr. De Courcy must have had some premonition of future trouble when he left all these duplicates in my hands," the judge observed; "it may have been his disposition to despond and dread coming evils, but I assure you both that my last interview with him, previous to his departure for France, was marked by the deepest melancholy on his part."

"Were there no other causes to account for his depression?" Heatherton asked.

"Remember, Judge Lester, that I have as yet heard but a very meagre account of my friend's story, and as I may have

something of my own to add that needs the confirmation of your experience, may it not be well to go over the whole to me here in a succinct narrative?"

"Certainly, and I hope neither of you are young and thoughtless enough to disagree with me when I pronounce my dear boy Eugene's meeting with me, a providential affair. I was on the very eve of a departure for Europe, where I intended finding needful mental rest in travelling for the next year, and had the accident that introduced us to each other not occurred when it did, or had the results taken a different turn, I might never have seen him, nor he been won to give me his confidence."

"That is true," the doctor assented gravely. "It was a noble generous piece of self-devotion in a youth, to peril a life full of promise and value in an effort to save an old man from a sudden and terrible death."

"Nay, my dear boy, do not attempt to lessen the noble bravery of the act, by saying that you were depressed and disappointed, and life seemed worthless at the moment. I am too fully experienced in all such momentary sensations to believe that they give the brain coolness, and the soul resolution. Such qualities spring from noble hearts and minds, and to them I owe my existence now, under Heaven's mercy.

"I was driving doctor, with a new pair of horses, of whose temper and docility I had received strong assurance, but who became uncontrollably alarmed at the sudden breaking of one of their traces. No sooner were they conscious of the accident than they began to run, and I had used all my strength and determination to stay their headlong course in vain. They flew like winged terrors, and the carriage, light and fragile as it was, seemed to dance behind them in the air. I braced myself in vain to retain my seat, my strength gave out, my brain whirled, and in a moment more I should have been thrown violently out upon the stones or dragged forward by the terrified animals, when my gallant preserver threw himself between me and sudden death, and received an injury in my behalf, from which he is scarcely yet recovered."

Judge Lester laid his hand affectionately on Eugene's shoulder as he spoke, and the young man with a heightened color again endeavored to disclaim all glory in the bravery of the action.

"Even before I had heard his name, his face appeared familiar to me—for his likeness to his father is remarkable in every way; and now in relation to that gentleman, I will tell you the little I gained in my acquaintance, for from the first I was interested by his bearing and manner, and often wished that his evident avoidance of strangers had not interfered with my cultivating a closer friendship.

"He belonged to a noble old Norman family of wealth and exceedingly lofty ideas, and gained their disapprobation by his love for a very sweet and suitable girl the daughter of his tutor, who at the death of her father became a professional teacher of drawing.

"The persecution of his father and other members of his family only brought Mr de Courcy's passion to a climax and he irrevocably offended his relatives by marrying and braving their wrath.

"At first they subjected him to every variety of insult and reproach, and finally they drove him away from the place of his birth by persistent persecution.

"He came with his wife and baby to the United States, and for a time had a hard struggle for existence. While in extreme poverty he encountered his father's old valet, a person called Soubette, who had also emigrated with his family, and through this man he heard of the welcome news of a small but sufficient annuity being due him from his mother's estate, which it seems was to be paid unconditionally to him, or his agents, and had been kept back, in the effort to humble him into deserting and ignoring his poor young wife, which seems to have been the family's object in their harsh actions toward him. At this time I was a lawyer in general practice, and Mr de Courcy applied to me to obtain his claim, which I was soon able to do for him, together with the unpaid sum of the preceding years, which enabled him to begin life here in comparative comfort.

"I believe he hailed his troubles as passed, for he became cheerful and contented, and whenever we met displayed a most attractive and agreeable disposition."

When the judge had gone so far, he paused and took Eugene's hand with a fatherly pressure in his own.

"I never saw your mother's face, my dear boy," he said, sadly, "but I am convinced from her picture that she was a creature of rare and tender beauty, that your father's love for her was of the deepest and most ardent kind, as his unconsolable grief at her loss evinces.

"She died very early, how I do not know, but I have always supposed her to have had some foreboding of her coming doom, and your orphanage; because so much that I have traced in these papers here was her suggestion and arrangement, tending to establish proofs of your birth and lineage, and of the rights from which your father was for a time banished by his love for her.

"Among the rest I understood that she had—in infinitely small, but perfectly legible characters—traced on exceedingly fine paper, formed in leaves and filled into a locket, which she placed round your baby neck—the complete history of your claim to the De Courcy estate in case of your unmarried uncle's death; and I was assured by your father, the only time he ever spoke to me on the subject of these future rights, that in that small space was condensed evidence sufficient to prevent any spurious claimants ever coming between you and your rights, since in it were named family secrets, the knowledge of which must remain unknown to all but the De Courcys."

Both Heatherton and Eugene uttered exclamations simultaneously at this allusion. Each had reason to recognize and remember the secret paper.

"I see you have heard of this before," resumed the judge, looking from one to the other. "I am glad of it, for I can assure you it will be of the greatest importance in our future operations, and besides has the value of a prophetic love gift from your mother's hand, my dear Eugene.

"Your father spoke of it when we parted; he had received notice from home of his father's death and his brother's failing health.

"A letter had come to him, filled with regrets for the past, and offers of friendship for the future, and he was going to France, as he assured me, to secure his boy's future; as for his own, its hopes were buried in his darling wife's grave. He confessed to me that he had not written to them of her, that he never should name her, they had never seen her, but condemned her for her humble birth, when she was as noble and gracious as a queen. He never reached the shores of his native land—he died of a fever on the passage, as I have just learned, for until I met Eugene I knew nothing further of his fate. Since then my secret inquiries have discovered that he died as I have stated, and his boxes, &c., being sent to his supposed widow's address by the captain with whom he sailed, and who had known him previously, must have first suggested the bold scheme of Soubette's daughter to whom his child was intrusted."

"No doubt, sir," acquiesced Heatherton, nodding his head. "I have seen Mrs. Blanchard lately and a woman more utterly unscrupulous or more completely an actress in every movement and word, I never beheld."

Eugene shuddered at her name.

"I lived with her for years, this knowledge coming to me by instinct," he said, in a low thrilling voice. "I do not remember the time when I did not suspect her. I never believed in her affection for me, though at first, before she grew hardened and bitter, she used to affect fondness in her manner toward me. But that was before Violet's birth. When the dear innocent little beauty, whom I must always love as my sister, came, I was left to myself, and my miserable, aimless education, that had always been carried on at the whim and fancy of Mrs. Blanchard, was utterly neglected.

"I wandered over the house in an idle dreamy way, feeling the cloud that had always hung over me deepening in density, and wondering what I was made for, and why I lived at all.

"One night I awoke suddenly, and I saw her whom I had been taught to call mother standing like a ghost at my bedside. She looked toward me, but not at me, and her eyes were unlike any others I had ever beheld, in their rayless, distended vacancy.

"'You must go away,' she said, speaking in a muffled tone that was painfully strange to listen to, 'you must leave this house never to return because your presence is a curse to us all, a disgrace and a shame. Listen,' and she leaned close to my pillow; 'if my child lives, I must kill you, because I cannot suffer you to live together; take warning and go!'

"Remember I was only a lad then, and this interview filled me with fear and horror. I think I knew even then, that she walked and spoke in her sleep; but I also knew and surmised enough of her waking thoughts, to feel that she had expressed nearly the tenor of her waking mind in her strange slumber.

"I had no one to speak to, not a living creature to whom to turn for advice or counsel. Mr. Blanchard always avoided me, and seemed anxious to be as little as possible in the house on all occasions, and there was no friend then in the world for me.

"Later when I began to be a man in years, when my warped mind bowed more than ever under the burden of its painful secret, I found what my soul yearned for—some one to love."

Dr. Heatherton made as though he would have interrupted his friend at this point; but Judge Lester gave him a warning look, and Eugene proceeded.

"I believe that reticence is the fault of my nature, and one of the fruits of that suspicious shrinking, that became its leading element in the years that I bore my secret alone in my boyish breast.

"For once I will conquer it, dear friends, and confess to you both, that a new feeling mingled with my existence, after meeting with Marian Barton, the daughter of the family I have named to you both in former conversations.

"By some strange means she came to know, and understand Mrs. Blanchard.

"She never told me how; I could only surmise that as my reputed mother was obliged to stay all night at their house, once, during a terrible storm, she may have, in her habit of sleep walking and talking, disclosed to the vigilant girl her wicked secret.

"At all events she never met Mrs. Blanchard afterward, unless she was forced into her presence, and her evident aversion soon marked her as a victim to the revengeful woman's hate.

"I owe to Marian Barton my rescue from gloomy brooding, that bordered on madness; from her strong noble friendship I drank in a new life, and began a new career.

"She awakened me, gave me strength, impulse, ambition. She opened a future before me, and filled my mind with noble yearnings for a higher life. All my old clouds of distrust, misery, and torpor fell like a tattered garment off my shoulders, and I felt myself rising and soaring in a clear new day.

"Suddenly, without one word of preparation or warning, this idol fled from me, and my whole life fell into darkness in that one wretched hour.

"She met me coldly, and yet there was something of sorrow in her voice as she spoke. I entreated her to see me alone—and when we were face to face she bade me farewell forever, without one word of explanation, and rushing from me in distressful haste, left me alone with my broken heart."

Again Heatherton made an effort to speak, and his face expressed an eagerness to explain something, but Eugene with downcast eyes and pale, compressed lips, went on with his painful story.

"That night, after an interview with my sister Violet, in which the dear girl proved her sisterly tenderness for me, I sat alone in my own apartment, brooding over my unhappy fate, and wondering whether some terrible doubt about my parentage, had not influenced Marian to forsake me.

"A sound broke on my unhappy revery, and I looked quickly up to behold a man whom I had never seen, bending over me with a strange and sinister look.

"My room was separated from the rest of the house chambers, and for a moment the thought came to me, that he had been hired by Mrs. Blanchard as an assassin, to rid her forever of my obnoxious presence. He spoke and dispelled my foolish thought, but not until I had caught him by the throat, and thrown him on the carpet.

"He seemed surprised at my strength, but not in the least frightened, and whispering to me to hold on, and make no row, proceeded to inform me that he knew who I was, and could show me how to obtain my rights if I would trust myself to his guidance, and follow him to the house of an old man who had been my grandfather's valet.

"'His name's Soubette,' he continued, 'and he's the father of this woman here, that has passed herself off for your mother. Oh, ain't she a smart one though, and hain't she fooled the French lawyers and nobs into believing her to be your father's widow! Her own dad is almost as much afraid of her as he is of the police, and you couldn't get him to say a word that could be used in evidence against her, if he knowed it. But what you must do, is to wait your time, and gather your facts. You'll find plenty of 'em, and I'll help you, for fair pay. When you've found out all you want to know, just come down on her, and she'll slope like a ghost at day-break, and then you can march in and take possession.'

"I demurred at first to this underhand proceeding, and said something about putting my case in legal hands, but the man interrupted me with a contemptuous laugh.

"'You aint got no case yet, 'cept your suspicions,' said he, 'and you can't get a lawyer worth having to move on them. No, no, you be advised by them that knows, and pick up your information first. I hope you ain't afraid to trust yourself with me; a gent that is trained to such strength as you've got oughtn't to be easy scared.'

"I assured him that I was not in the least alarmed; and having received a word or two of strange information from a woman who accosted me a day or two previous, which agreed with what I now heard, my resolution was soon taken. I parted from my old home without one word of explanation, and in the dead of night followed the man to his down-town abode, where I remained in hiding, following his direction, and gaining all the knowledge I could in reference to my early life and lost parents, until I found myself ready for action.

"Almost every word you have told me to-night," he continued, turning to Judge Lester, "was gleaned piecemeal in my intercourse with Soubette and his household, and I listened to it in delight, since it convinced me of the truth of my researches at the house of the old counterfeiter, for such I must confess was the calling of my grandfather's former valet."

"You saw me there," said Heatherton, "and felt it was best to avoid me, I suppose, since at that time your plans were not sufficiently matured for denouement."

"That is true—but I should explain also, that I believed myself to have been unrecognized by you. Had I thought you aware of my presence, I might have risked all to have made you understand my position there."

"Well, now my dear Eugene," cried Heatherton, leaning forward, and grasping his friend's hand with ardor, "I shall begin my shorter but not less interesting story, and expect to live always in your love and gratitude, in consideration of the joy my words must give your tried but too sensitively questioning heart.

"I know the Barton family, I have been with them almost daily for many weeks, and I can assure you on my life that Miss Marian, one of the noblest and most lovely girls I ever looked upon, is wholly and solely devoted to you, and that the division existing between you is one that her pride suggested for family reasons. Mrs. Blanchard may have influenced her also, by some threat against you if she refused to give you up; but the main reason I believe from observation, to have been her high idea of your sense of honor, and her dread of some existing stain in her own unhappy home."

"What is it that you tell me, can I have beheld falsely, and were my eyes faithless to me?" cried Eugene, in strange commotion. "Oh, Max, my friend, my brother, prove to me that Marian loves me, and you will have given life its blessed zest again, and made my future too bright, too blissful far for my deserts!"

A lady in the prime of life, with a noble bearing and sweet and gracious face, appeared at the library door at that instant, and by her presence interrupted Eugene's rapture.

She wore a very different expression from the one that had marked her face, the day she withdrew her patronage from Miss Gauzewell's establishment, yet she was undoubtedly the very same Mrs. Lester; and had Marian seen her fine face as it beamed upon the assembled group, full of interest and affection, she would have long ago carried into execution the thought that had often come to her in her desperate need, of appealing to the lady who had witnessed the cause of her first trouble and misfortune in business.

All three gentleman turned toward her, as she entered, but it was to Dr. Heatherton only that she spoke.

"There is a person here whom I wish you would see," she said in a low tone; "please come with me to the reception room on the lower floor, and you can come back, and explain it all to Eugene and my husband presently, if you decide that it is best."

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 8.)

MY CHUM.

BY JACK RATLIN.

He was a slight built, active little fellow, the model of a foretopman, and it was as refreshing to look at his face as a drink to a thirsty sailor. His face was smooth as a girl's, and his dark eyes and merry smile made the forecastle of the Delaware seem brighter when he moved about in it.

The Delaware was a tea ship, homeward bound from Canton, loaded to the hatches with chests of fragrant tea. The owners were so avaricious that they forgot that some room was necessary for defence, and the few carronades we carried were jammed in between the water casks in such a way that it would be almost impossible to get at them in time of need.

We had two passengers—an American gentleman and his daughter, going home to the States from China, where he had made his fortune. The girl was beautiful,—one of those sunny little creatures that seem to take a man's heart by storm, and when she walked about the quarter deck the old salts would look after her as if they saw an angel—and they did.

I forgot to say that Ned Carroll joined us in Canton. The "old man" hesitated some time, for he could tell that Ned was not a common foremast Jack, but Ned used arguments the old man could not stand, and as he was short of hands, and none to be got for love or money, Ned was shipped.

Miss Clifford was on deck when we were off the Bogue Forts, standing out to sea, with the pilot just going over the side, and as she stood there Ned passed by and touched his cap, as any gentleman should who passes a lady. She looked wildly at him, and the color went out of her face, but the next minute she flushed like a rose, and Ned went on, with a queer smile upon his face. He took to me somehow, from the first; perhaps because I was a gray old salt, and could put him up to a dodge or two in the business. Anyway he liked me, and when we were in the foretop alone I tackled him.

"Look y here, young 'un," I said, "you knowed that young lady afore."

"What makes you say that, old tarry-fist?" he said, laughing. "You don't know what you are talking about."

"Mebbe I don't, Ned, but I reckon as how I does; you knowed her afore."

"See here, Jack," he says, "do you like me pretty well?"

"How kin any one help likin' you, scapegrace," I said. "What of it?"

"Because when I ask a favor I like to ask it from a *friend*," he said. "Now the favor I want to ask is this; don't notice anything between Miss Clifford and myself. She knows me and why I am here, and I tell you there is no harm in it."

"Don't you know I'd knock you into the shape of a stunk lump in about two seconds if I thought you meant anything wrong?" I said. "Don't be a stupid, and I promise not to watch you too close."

The Delaware was a fast boat, and we made the water fly for two days as there was a stiff sailing breeze. Two or three times I saw Ned pass Miss Clifford, and every time he did the red signal went up in her cheek. But I never see him speaking to her until one night after dark when her father was below and she came to the heel of the bowsprit looking out ahead. Ned was there leaning on the rail.

"Why are you here?" she said, quickly. "It is madness—it is worse than madness. If *he* should know you, all our hopes are blasted."

"I could not keep away," he said, "because I love—"

I was in the fore shrouds and shinned up higher, because I didn't want to hear any secrets. She stayed with him nigh half an hour, and I was thinking to myself that this young swab was getting on tol'able well with a rich young gal, when she gave him her hand and he kissed it, and then she went away, looking over her shoulder. Then he looked up and see me perched in the foretop, and up he came.

"She's a noble girl, old man," he said, softly. "And I'll try to make her happy after all her kindness."

"You're considerable of a cheat, my son," I said. "Now who *be* you, anyway?"

"I'll tell you after we land," he said. "For the present I am Ned Carroll, foremast hand in the ship Delaware, and shall do my duty as such. Do you think there is any danger off Corea?"

"Danger; not while we've got a good breeze off the land. But let it come calm, or we get beached on that there coast, and I'd take my chances with North American Injuns first. These Coreans are fighters; they ain't no Chinamen."

We ran down the coast for two days more, and on the morning of the fifth the shores of Corea loomed up through the haze. There was little wind and a dense fog was rolling off the land, so that we could not see a face twenty feet away. We headed away from the land and there was just wind enough to keep her steady without moving her much. I was on the to'gallant forecast when I saw one of these queer Corean boats go by close under our stern, paddling into the land.

I went to the first Dickey and reported what I had seen, and he went to the old man, who ordered the arm-chest opened, and boarding nets trussed up, for he knew the treachery of these people.

An hour passed, and we heard nothing, and I began to think the fellows in the boat had not seen us. Mr. Clifford and his daughter were standing near me, and he was speaking.

"It is useless to talk, Flora," he said. "If Edward, after what I have told him, leaves Canton without my permission before the year is up I will never forgive him, nor shall you marry him."

I could see what he said touched her, and she turned pale as a ghost.

"You are both too young," continued the father. "Let Edward prove himself a man by some brave act, and I shall no longer hesitate. But—"

Just then I could see a queer-shaped pennant fluttering in the haze, and I hailed the deck. The "Dickey" ran to the rail.

"Boat aboy! what boat is that?"

A wild yell was his answer, and the men jumped for the arm-chests. It was well that they had been opened, for by the time the boys had snatched up each a musket, pistols and sabre, a large junk bumped against us on the lee bow, and rough grappling-irons were thrown aboard. We had a good crew, and as the beggars all wanted to board at the same spot, our boys made lively work. They were big, black, ugly-looking thieves, and if I do say it, fought like tigers. There were more than a hundred in the junk, and our twenty were forced back a little, while some of the beggars began to board amidships. Ned Carroll saw this, and called to me, and with three men who had just come out of the caddy, the cook, steward and his mate, we made that place good.

Ned had a sabre, and the way he used it was a sin. Three black Coreans rushed at him together, and before I could rush in to help him, two of them had gone to Davy Jones, and the other, scared by the way he went at them, was back in the junk.

"Come here, Jack," cried Ned. "I want you."

I ran aft, and as we went the Coreans poured their numbers at my brave mates. "Come on, you skulkers," yelled the captain, shaking a bloody sabre at us. "Die like men!"

But we didn't come, and they fell back, step by step, leaving bloody tracks behind them. Just then a low rumbling was heard, and something which glittered as brightly as the steel blades pushed out between the masts, and revealed a brass six-pounder, which the captain was carrying to Calcutta for a city artillery company.

"Clear the way," cried Ned. The captain looked over his shoulder, and at his order the men sprang into the rigging, and the little six pounder, loaded to the muzzle with grape, swept the deck from end to end. At the same time the wind began to rise and the sails filled. That done of grape sickened the Coreans, and they went for their junk; but one man, evidently a leader among them, had seized Miss Clifford and was dragging her away. I saw Ned Carroll leave the gun, make three leaps along the deck, and his cutlass crossed with the sabre of the Corean captain. One, two, three; and six inches of cold steel shone out between the shoulders of the Corean, and Ned caught Miss Clifford in his arms.

"Edward Carroll!" cried Mr. Clifford. "You here?"

"It is lucky that I am," said the youngster, turning upon him quickly. "You parted me from the girl I loved, not because I had no money, position or character, but because I was not a *man*. Have I proved myself a man to-day? I shipped on the Delaware a common hand, to be near Flora, and I am not sorry for it. You banished me from her presence for a year, and I could not live without her."

"I forgive you, Edward," said Mr. Clifford extending his hand. "Forgive *me* for having wronged you."

So I lost my chum, for they went ashore at Calcutta and were married. And, mates, when the locker runs dry, I've only got to run alongside Ned Carroll to get a full supply. They'll take care of the old salt until he goes to Davy Jones.

So the tale ended.

☞ CONTRACTS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE.—Adam B. Bassett, of Boston, sued her husband to recover six hundred and twenty dollars which she "loaned" him after their marriage in 1866, the parties having separated in 1869 but took her case as no contract between a husband and wife for the payment of money has any validity in law.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

"FAIRE MOUNT." By H. PETERSON author of "Pemberton; or, One Hundred Years Ago." Published by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger Philadelphia.

This is a little volume of 30 pages, containing a poem relative to Fairmount Park—or Faire-Mount as in old times they used to write it. It is very prettily gotten up in gift-book style by the publishers, with handsome gilt-lettered binding, thick white paper, and with four full page engravings—of "Faire Mount," "Belmont," "Moore's Cottage," and the "View From Belmont." As to the Poem itself it does not become us to say more than that it treats of the various associations which cling around the Park, and render it an appropriate place for the site of the Centennial celebration. Many of our distant readers may not know that the Park is to a considerable degree an aggregation of old country seats, taking in Solitude, owned by the Penn Family; The Hills, Robert Morris's old place; Belmont, where Washington was a frequent visitor; Mount Pleasant once owned by Benedict Arnold; the Cottage of which the poet Moore wrote the charming ballad, commencing, "I knew by the smoke that so gracefully curled," &c.

We make the following extracts from the poem:—

And here, when all the weary strife was o'er,
Came our great CHIEFTAIN—Chieftain still, and more—
Sad from those cares of State he little loved,
From angry factions by his voice reproved,
From bitter quarrels, painful to his heart,
Where all were right, and all were wrong in part,
To thy calm shades, Belmont where hemlocks rise
In solemn grandeur to the untroubled skies,
To gaze upon thy landscape fair and wide,
And seek that peace from nature man denied.

Had these old trees a voice, these groves elate
Doubtless could tell a tale of olden state—
Of a cream-colored chariot, gilded bright,
With rosy cupids on its panels light,
With crested harness, and six blooded bays,
Dashing at speed along these winding ways—
Coachman and footmen, gay postilions too,
In white and crimson liveries, spick and new,
Flashing and fine, a brilliant cavalcade,
Brightening the sun, and lighting up the shade.

Stops at a quick command the gallant show,
Down spring the obsequious footmen, bowing low,
Out from the chariot steps upon the sward,
Clad in black velvet, at his side a sword,
A tall and stately figure. Such the tale
These groves might tell unto the listening vale.
* * * * *
And often here, beneath the summer's sun,
Our Newton and our Socrates in one,
Came to refresh his soul by Schuylkill's side,
And wander through these wood-paths far and wide.
Dear to his heart, as dear as native earth,
The soil which gave him friends and wife and hearth.
These were the scenes he loved, and this the sky
On which he bent his calm and thoughtful eye;—
That thunder-cloud, which rears its threatening form,
Dread parent of the lightning and the storm,
Is kin to that with which his spirit strove,
And wrested from its grasp the bolts of Jove,
Wins on its lurid arch with pen of flame
The vanquished fighting wrote a FRANKLIN'S name.
Oh round the sage and patriot but return
From heights celestial to this earthly bourne,
What keen delight his philanthropic mind
In all the wonders of our age would find—
The marvelous ship, that scorns both wind and tide,
The iron steed a thousand men might ride,
The magic wire, from his own kite-string planned,
Through which, though seas divide, land speaks to land.
At sight of these, would he not backward start,
With a bewildered gaze and throbbing heart?—
Vain thought! and fit to move an angel's mirth.
Can we think heaven a lesser place than earth?
Or that a FRANKLIN in that grander sphere,
Lingers behind the march of Science here?
* * * * *
Pause we a moment and behold the scene—
Earth has no fairer. Mid its hills of green,
Where play the sunbeams with the shadows dun,
A mighty mirror shining in the sun,
Lies the broad river, while on either hand
Stretching metal arches, joining land to land.
Above the wood, a massive pile of white,
In classic grandeur, reaching the sight,
Thy generous gift, GIRARD, gleams proud and high,
Outlined against the dim and distant sky.
A mass of red the outstretching city glows,
A line of white the distant river flows,
And all around are wooded hill and glade,
And graceful curve, and play of light and shade,
While o'er the heated brow and troubled mind
Blow the cool waves of the rejoicing wind.
Oh who can gaze on such a scene nor feel
What pen can never express, nor words reveal—
Some thought as if within a fairer clime
We once had dwelt in happiness sublime!
These are perchance but stirrings of the wings
On which we yet shall soar to higher things,
When as these earthly bonds shall broken be,
And the freed spirit seek its native sky.
* * * * *
And now the white man treads these hills alone,
The great, original people all are gone.
Build we ourselves then the grand CONSCIL FIRE,
And call each gallant son, each veteran sire,
Here where was born a Nation in a day,
A young Achilles, ready for the fray;
Here where so many memories gloom and glow
Of that long fight one hundred years ago,
Here may all gather on this smooth, green sward,
And for his gracious mercies thank the Lord.
Here bring the fruits of earth, the spoils of art,
The boast of busy hands and wealthy mart,
Rare brain of mankind, woman's kindly mouth,
Skill of the North, and richness of the South;
And as we bring them, say with one accord,
"These are our First Fruits, great and blessed Lord!
Forgive us aught the Past has wrongly done,
And make the hearts of all the heart of one;
Still bind our States in a well-ord red band,
Where Power shall walk with Freedom hand-in-hand;
Where none shall claim a right he will not give,
Nor by his might force other men to live.
Thus bid all strife and evil contention cease,
By blessing all with Liberty and Peace!"

The price of the book is one dollar. Any of our country readers who may wish it, can have it forwarded to them (postage paid) by inclosing one dollar to the office of THE POST.

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY for DECEMBER. Published by J. R. Osgood & Co., Boston. The mind of the editor of the "Atlantic," we regret to say, seems to be failing in vigor. We should think it wise for the publishers to withdraw him from active mental labor—if what he does can properly be called *mental* labor—lest paralysis both to himself and the magazine should ensue. Of course this would not be a matter of serious detriment to the country, for there are now so many magazines that it is evident some of them must die, but we confess we should regret to hear of the death of the Atlantic. A peaceful, quiet and garrulous old age in which it might prate on for years of the superiority of Boston to the rest of the world, and that no great writer ever was or could be born out of Massachusetts, would be what we should wish for it. And the indications are that it has entered upon such a cheerful old age already—and if it will only take our advice relative to its present editor, who appears to be failing too rapidly even for the magazine, it may hope to linger on for many happy, if idiotic, years longer.

SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY for December. Published by Scribner & Co., New York.

LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE for December. Published by J. B. Lippincott & Co., Phila.

THE GALAXY for December. Published by Sheldon & Co., New York.

THE EDINBURGH REVIEW for October. American edition. Published by the Leonard Scott Publishing Co., New York; and also for sale by W. B. Zieber, Philada.

☞ How many men marry, and before the honeymoon is passed begin to treat their partners with neglect! How many marry, and will not give up their intemperate habits, and thus their forsaken wives are left to pine in anguish at home! And how many marry who soon treat them as slaves, and care not how they insult them should they dare to utter a complaint!

The True Girl.

The true girl, says Dr. Crosby, has to be sought for. She does not parade herself as show goods. She is not fashionable. Generally she is not rich. But oh! what a heart she has when you find her! so large, and pure, and womanly! When you see it, you wonder if those showy things outside were really women. If you gain *her* love, your two thousand are a million. She'll not ask you for a carriage or a first-class house. She'll wear simple dresses, and turn them when necessary, with no vulgar *magnificat* to frown upon her economy. She'll keep everything neat and nice in your shy parlor, and give you such a welcome when you come home, that you'll think your parlor higher than ever. She'll entertain true friends on a dollar, and astonish you with the new thought, how very little happiness depends on money! She'll make you love home (if you don't you're a brute) and teach you how to pity, while you scorn, a poor fashionable society that thinks itself happy. Now do not I pray you say any more, "I can't afford to marry." Go, find the true woman, and you can! Throw away that cigar, burn up that switch cane, be sensible yourself, and seek your wife in a sensible way.

Necessary Conventionalities.

It is quite the fashion to protest against conventionality alike in morals and in etiquette; but it is a most mistaken protest. The order of things, as it is, is the result of the steady progression of the human race; and scarcely one of the trifling rules known as conventional restraints, but has been made for the convenience of society. It is so ceremonious to leave your card—yes, but it is disagreeable for your friend never to know you have been there. In most places in America it is the custom for the resident to call upon the stranger; but in Washington—where residents are busy, and strangers are the ones who need to extend their circle—the stranger calls on the resident.

This also is the case in Italian cities, where the birds of passage seek those who are at home in their nests. These are conventionalities and unimportant—yes, but if you do not understand them you miss the society which might have made your sojourn in a new place pleasant. All the manifold details of social life—its chaperones, its ceremonies, its reciprocal courtesies—have a basis of common sense, which examination will discover. And so of morals. So much of our morality is conventional say the self-styled reformers of to-day. But these very conventionalisms—these laws which bear so hardly on the individual—have elevated the race, have made homes purer, sweeter, and more permanent; and will reach downward with blessings for generations yet to come.

The Human Kitchen and its Dumb Waiters.—The body is supplied with aliment by vessels which connect the stomach and its auxiliaries with the venous system, and, so to speak, perform the office of dumb-waiters in a restaurant. In other words, these media or communication between the animal kitchen and its dependents supply to each member and organ, near or remote, the quantity and kind of sustenance required to keep it going. When the stomach is derelict in its duty, or the dumb-waiters inert or obstructed, it is the peculiar province of HOSTETTER'S CELEBRATED STOMACH BITTERS to strengthen and regulate them. Hence its marvelous cures of chronic indigestion, and the emaciation, debility and languor which are generally its concomitants. It is, moreover, a powerful alterative and corrective, and the rapidity with which it checks irregularities of the liver and bowels, and braces and invigorates the nervous system, is a marvel, not only to the general public, but to professional men.

Old Probabilities.—Our earnest friend, who sits at Washington, and receives, from the signal stations of a continent, reports on the vicissitudes of the weather, sorts, compares and infers from them the daily bulletins which everybody reads, might reasonably add, in view of our late sudden changes, "Colds, Coughs and Affections of the Throat and Lungs will prevail in the East and North. Warning signals continue in the West and South." In view of the truth of these probabilities, we commend to all sufferers that excellent and potent specific, AYER'S CHERRY PECTORAL. It has, in countless instances, saved life, and has, within the knowledge of every one, alleviated most alarming symptoms and effected cures almost surpassing belief. So excellent is it that the medical faculty largely use it in their practice. In cases of seated consumption, it prolongs life and softens the stay of the afflicted sufferer. About these days it is well to have it the house. By its timely use, serious disease may be checked and turned aside.—[*Sunbeam* (Iowa) *Item*.]

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THE
SATURDAY EVENING POST.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, DEC. 6, 1873.

TERMS---Always in Advance.

Single copy, $3.00 a year, payable in advance, not including postage, which is twenty cents a year, and payable at the office where the paper is received.

Every yearly subscriber will be entitled to a copy of our Premium Chromo, or to either of our large and beautiful Premium Steel Engravings—"The Sisters," "The Song of Home at Sea," or "Washington at Mount Vernon."

One copy of THE POST ($3.00) and one of T. S. ARTHUR'S HOME MAGAZINE ($2.50) will be sent for $4.50. Each publication will send one of its Premium pictures, at the choice of the subscriber, the same as if each was separately subscribed for.

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BE CAREFUL IN OPENING THE WRAPPERS OF THE CHROMO OR ENGRAVINGS. Our subscribers are enjoined to be very careful in opening the wrappers of the Chromo or Engravings when they are received lest they should injure them.

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SATURDAY EVENING POST,

No. 319 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

1874.

OUR NEW PREMIUM CHROMO.

After examining a great variety of subjects for our new Chromo, we concluded that we could find none to equal that which we already had in the popular engraving,

"ONE OF LIFE'S HAPPY HOURS."

And as we have had repeated demands for that picture, which, owing to the wearing out of the plate, we were unable to supply, we have made arrangements with the celebrated artists, Sinclair & Co., to get us up this subject, as a Chromo, for our new Premium Chromo for our yearly subscribers for 1874.

This next year, we shall make no distinction between our *yearly subscribers*, whether they subscribe *singly or in Clubs*. EVERY YEARLY SUBSCRIBER—SINGLE OR IN A CLUB—shall be entitled to a copy of the new Chromo, by sending on ten cents extra, to pay the cost of mailing.

Our terms are as follows—being much lower than those of any other first-class literary weekly:

One copy, (with a copy of premium Chromo),	$ 3.00
Four copies, (with four copies of premium Chromo),	8.00
Six copies, (with six copies of premium Chromo, and a copy extra of the Chromo to the sender of the Club),	12.00
Eight copies, (with eight copies of premium Chromo, and a copy both of THE POST and of the Chromo extra to the sender of Club),	16.00

All over eight at the same rate.

T. S. Arthur's Home Magazine may be subscribed for in the above clubs at $2.00.

In place of the Chromo, "One of Life's Happy Hours," we will send, if preferred, either of our large and beautiful Premium Steel Engravings, "The Sisters," "The Song of Home at Sea," or "Washington at Mount Vernon."

☞ Ten cents must always be remitted for each Chromo or Engraving ordered, to pay the extra expense incurred by us for mailing, postage, etc. Or, if it is desired that the Chromo should be mounted on stiff card-board, or on muslin (which is now generally preferred), 25 cents must be sent for each Chromo required to be so mounted.

Additions may be made to clubs at the same rate as the original club.

Those who design getting up clubs should commence at once, before the field is occupied by others. We offer, to say the least, as good a paper as the New York Ledger, Saturday Night, etc., and to Clubs at much lower terms, while we give a beautiful Chromo or steel engraving, in addition, and they give nothing.

Those who send on their clubs first, will have the first Chromos, of which a large edition is to be finished by the 1st of December. We trust to be able to supply all orders at once, but as on account of this offer to furnish them to club subscribers, and the well-known popularity of the picture, we expect to have an immense demand, we should advise the sending on of the clubs as early as possible.

Address

SATURDAY EVENING POST,

No. 319 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

We have made an arrangement with Mrs. Henry Peterson to furnish us with a weekly series of articles, somewhat similar to those which she was in the habit of contributing to the editorial columns of THE LADY'S FRIEND.

The many readers of THE LADY'S FRIEND who have regretted the discontinuance of the magazine on account of the severance of the connection between them and its gifted editress, will now have an opportunity of renewing the acquaintanceship in our columns. Mrs. Peterson's articles will treat of the City Fashions, the Ethics of Dress, Manners, Domestic Affairs, the Flower Garden, Books and other interesting subjects.

PREMIUM CHROMOS.

Glancing over one of the magazines the other day, we saw a very prominent advertisement of the *New York Observer*, which calls itself a "religious" newspaper.

In that advertisement we read as follows:

"We give *no Chromos, no Pictures*—(*a few cents will buy any of them*)."

Now the publisher of the "*Observer*" has a right to give Chromos, or not to give them, as he thinks best—but he has no right to go out of his way to cast a slur upon those who do give them. Neither has he the right to say what is not the truth in relation to the value either of Chromos or Steel engravings.

A "few cents" will *not* buy "any" of them. In fact, many of them could not be bought under a few *dollars*, except for the peculiar circumstances under which they are produced. Any one can test this by pricing Chromos and Engravings of no better quality in the engraving stores.

The explanation is very simple. When a Chromo publisher gets up a Chromo for sale in the usual way, he must base his price upon the calculation that it will have a certain average sale. If it falls much under that sale, he will make nothing, probably lose. If it exceeds it, and in proportion as it exceeds it, he will make.

A newspaper publisher, with a large circulation, goes to a manufacturer of Chromos, and says:—"What will you charge me for getting up such a Chromo?" The answer at once comes, "How many will you want?" If he wants them only by the hundreds, he will have to pay a high price. If he wants them by the thousands, much lower. If he wants them by the tens of thousands, the manufacturer will bring his prices down as low as he possibly can—often surprisingly low.

Now the practical working is this. The newspaper publisher does not care to reap a single cent of profit from his subscribers on the Chromo or Engraving; he simply uses it as an inducement to get more subscribers. If he should increase his subscription list more than sufficient to pay for the extra cost the Chromos are to him, he makes by the transaction. If he should not, he loses.

Probably the publisher of "*The Observer*" argues, "To go into the Chromo business is not a legitimate outlay—it involves a great deal of extra expense and trouble—and it is doubtful if it will increase our list enough to pay for it." And such an argument is a perfectly proper one—and one upon which every newspaper publisher must decide for himself. For our part we are very free to say, that if we had as many subscribers as we wanted, say, on a venture, half a million, we would see the Chromo business, with all its expense and trouble and worry, to the everlasting smithereens (if this be an allowable expression for a secular paper) before we would touch it. But we wish to increase, and still further increase our subscription list—and therefore we offer this Chromo inducement, at the same time that we make as good a paper as those which do not offer it.

From this explanation our readers will see how it is that a Chromo may be of an equal quality to those which cannot be sold in the stores for less than from three to five dollars, and yet be obtained in large quantities at such a price as to enable a newspaper publisher to offer it as a Premium to his subscribers.

LETTERS FROM ZIG.

YOUNG LADIES.

A woman has been lately writing, in one of the city papers here, some fearful bosh about another woman whom the first woman called a "young lady." The first person said that the second person had been brought up in a comfortable home with good papa and mamma, good eating and good clothes, gravy, oysters, laces, new bonnets, and all those things. By and by, old story, good papa and mamma died; no more oysters, laces, new bonnets for the interesting daughter, from the fact that there had been a too muchness of that sort of business while good papa was living. Interesting daughter suddenly had to "come down" and work like other folks for her living, awful to relate. She applied to a lady well-known for Christianity and benevolence to help her to get some sewing. Lady asked her some questions quite in business-like, common-sense style, whereupon young lady's "eyes filled with tears," and she quoted Scripture. Lady asked a question or two more, and was so diabolically heartless and cruel as to call the "young lady" a working-girl. Then the "young lady" became fearfully indignant, and felt herself hopelessly aggrieved and insulted at the obnoxious name "working-girl." She "shuddered to think of the dark future," quoted more Scripture and called herself a shorn lamb, and bade the lady a spunky good-day with her back very much up.

Now, I could wish to be permitted to suggest an amendment to the "young lady's" metaphor. Instead of being a shorn lamb as she calls herself, I should say she was a downright sheep, and an uncommonly silly one. That is to say, I mean she was a lamb, to be sure, but a full-grown lamb. How under the heavens a full-sized human being in good health and with all her faculties about her can have the face to call herself a lamb, I don't know. Lamb indeed! She ought to have been ashamed of herself.

But she wasn't. She told another woman about it, in her wrath, and the other woman rushed off into print with the whole sad tale of a lamb. They were both of 'em fools.

Biz is biz.

That's what my beloved female sisters are continually forgetting. The "young lady" was very enraged because the lady called her a "working-girl," and asks the lady through the public press, how she would like to have *her* daughter coarsely and unfeelingly addressed as a "working-girl." That's rubbish, however. The question is: Is a spade a spade, or isn't it? Is or isn't Miss Flouncer, who makes and trims dresses for her living, a working-girl? Is or isn't Miss Spellingwell, who teaches tow-headed urchins' ideas how to shoot, a working-girl? Is or isn't Miss Screamer, the opera-singer, who delights at the same time that she scares people with sweet screeches to the tune of a thousand dollars a night, a working-girl? I say every mortal woman who works for other people and gets pay for it, no matter who, what, or where she is, is a working-woman, and to all human intents and purposes, just as much of a working-girl as Bridget who scrubs the kitchen floors. Any woman who works is a working-woman, no matter what sort of work she does. The name working-woman is an honest, brave title, and the girl or woman who has a spark of sense will glory in it. The very name itself shows that the wearer of it is a heroine, strong and spirited, too nobly proud to be a drone in the hive of humanity. A working-girl is one who earns her right to live as she goes along. For a person who does no work of any kind, and is of no use in any shape or form to anybody in the world, has surely no right to live. The human race was intended for a life of labor, and through labor and restless, ceaseless striving, to struggle upward to a higher, finer, more beautiful existence. Therefore women ought to glory in the fact of earning their own living, and glory in and be worthy of the honorable, brave name of working-woman.

As to whether a working-woman is a lady or not, that is another question. That depends. She may be a lady or she may not be, just as she chooses. Because, like beauty, lady is as lady does. When I used to be a schoolmistress, there was a lady in the neighborhood whose acquaintance I felt myself honored to make and keep. The lady was a washerwoman. She was gentle-mannered, sensible and kindly, with a voice and ways which would have been no disgrace to any lady in our republic. At the same time there was a millionaire's wife in the neighborhood, who called herself the grand lady, *la grande dame*, of those parts, who was an coarse, vulgar, stingy, and ungrammatical a creature as you'd find in ten States. Now the washerwoman was a lady and the rich woman was—well, the rich woman wasn't. The rich woman wore silk dresses every day and talked bad grammar by the hundred yards. She called herself a lady, and used to throw cups of hot coffee in her husband's face, in a passion. She called herself a lady, and used to tell lies and impose upon other people shamefully. She wasn't a lady at all. She was a poor, pitiful snob, a contemptible, miserable snob, who knew no more about being a lady than she did about grammar. It is the result of my experience and observation that a woman who has the heart and manners of a lady and is a lady, will usually be treated as a lady, no matter what she does for a living. I have noticed that all my life. A refined, dignified woman will be treated as a lady. A scrub-girl may be a lady if she wants to.

Another thing this silly "young lady" went off in a state of high dudgeon about, was that the lady to whom she applied for sewing, advised her to go and seek kitchen-work. The insult fairly raised the wool off the head of this shorn lamb. Kitchen-work for a shorn lamb! To think that an individual woman, when applied to for sewing by a full-sized shorn lamb with tears in its eyes, would be heartless enough to suggest kitchen-work! That was the bitter butcher-knife which at last penetrated this promising young lady sheep's heart. Kitchen-work! Merciful Providence! "How can you make a fool perceive that he is a fool?" says Thackeray. "Such a person can no more see his own folly than he can his own ears." That appears to be exactly the failing which afflicts this young lady sheep. She proceeds again to ask the lady through the newspaper how she would like to have kitchen-work hinted at the ears of one of her own daughters.

Now it appears to me that if the lady had the sense of a common kitten, and her daughters had to earn their living, and couldn't find anything else to do, she would very, very gladly welcome kitchen-work for them, rather than starvation. The average woman of this country makes a very grand mistake. It is to suppose that the kind of work one does will of itself confer honor or dishonor on the worker. It is the worker who honors the work by doing it well. Kitchen-work well done is far higher than school-teaching or piano-bumping badly done. Work is work, and scouring knives is every bit as honorable as writing newspaper-articles, providing the knives are well scoured.

Kitchen-work doesn't degrade a "young lady." No sort of honest work can degrade a real lady. Some of the best, wealthiest, handsomest, most "stylish" even, when it comes to that, of the ladies in this city, to my certain knowledge were hired kitchen-girls and sewing-girls in their youth. The Empress Catharine, wife of Czar Peter the Great, was a peasant girl who worked in the fields. I doubt whether she turned up her nose at kitchen-work, and half-starved herself hunting around for an easy place to work, a place where people would regard her tender feelings, and wouldn't tread on her corns by calling her a "working-girl." What nonsense, to be sure! Easy places are not to be had for the asking, and most people who have such have had to work up to easy places through the hard places.

So it behooves all people who are out of employment, now especially with the hard times upon us, to take what they can get, and be thankful that they can get anything. It won't be surprising if "young ladies" will be glad to get even kitchen-work before the winter is over, thinking, like the penniless lass who refused the old Laird o' Cockpen and then repented:

"For ane I'll get better, it's waur I'll get ten,
I was daft to refuse the Laird o' Cockpen."

It hurts my feelings to hear anybody speak of good, old-fashioned house-work as degrading. It is not easy work—nobody who knows anything will pretend that, but it is pleasant, healthy, and independent, and would be considered honorable, if nice American girls who are trying to maintain a shabby-genteel, half-starved existence at sewing or being shop-girls, would take hold of it and make it honorable. No young woman in America need suffer, while there is so much house-work to be done. And I say again that if the young woman who does house-work conducts herself as a lady, she can find plenty of good homes where the mistress and all the rest will be sensible enough to treat her as a lady. Would I be willing to try it myself? Yes, I would.

My dear "young ladies" who are out of work;—if you can't get such work as you want, take the work which lies nearest you, and do your best at it. Do your best, and your best will always lead you to something better.

ZIG.

A MYSTERY.

BY GLEN CAROL.

"We have careful thoughts for the stranger,
And smiles for the sometime guest—
But oft for our own, the bitter tone,
Though we love 'our own' the best."

I wonder why it is that we are ever courteous and considerate toward acquaintances and strangers, yet often-times abrupt, careless, and even uncivil where those of our own immediate family, those we love best on earth, are concerned? How quickly would we resent those looks and tones, if addressed by another to our dear ones! How sharp would be our rebuke, how warm our defence of those beloved! Yet we do not hesitate to use just such words and tones ourselves, lose our temper, and make ourselves disagreeable generally—and there is no one to punish us, or make us feel ashamed that we have overstepped the bounds of kindness and politeness, save that inevitable watch-dog, Conscience, whose sharp teeth we must feel, soon or late. He may be chained and muzzled for a season, but time and circumstance will free him at last; then, beware his fangs!—there is no escape. There is no law compelling people to behave themselves at home, and when we pass forth into the world, leaving home behind us, no laws seem to be needed to guide us in our conduct. We are all walking editions of "*Etiquette*," in the broadest sense of the term, *then*. We can inconvenience ourselves for strangers, and smile blandly at the trouble given us. Dresses can be torn, and parasols broken, glossy boots muddied, and tender toes stepped on, and it is all endured with a gracious and suave air, with an unflinching politeness and courtesy which we would do well to carry back with us to our homes—but the delightful mask is dropped too often at the threshold, and as if in revenge for the day's petty trials, "home-folks" receive the benefit of the storm that has been secretly gathering behind the sunshine!

There are many mysteries afloat, and this is one of them—why we should "snap" our dear ones, and smile upon outsiders and strangers—why we should sometimes act like—*like the mischief*, at home; but never, by any possibility, otherwise than angelically, abroad!

Could we solve the problem, if we *tried*?

FOR ONE'S SAKE.

BY PAULINE PILKINGTON PILER.

Oh, rose, oh, rose,
So nodding, nodding in blushful grace,
And hanging low your sweet, shy face
When winds come wooing, merry,
Drop down your honey on the air,
And on my lips; I kiss you fair,
For the sake of my own dearie.

Sea-shell, sea-shell,
You tinted, jeweled, gleaming thing
That still one murmurous song do sing
Of under-seas in lapping cheery,
Of under-depth's beryllic gleam,
Where all is fair as beauteous dream
Of natal land of fairy;

Sea-shell, sea-shell,
You glittering, gilded, gleaming thing,
Gemming the wavelets plumy wing,
And dashed upon the beaches near,
I kiss your lips with kisses meet,
As I'd kiss her mouth so small and sweet,
For the sake of my love, my dear.

Ah, life, dear life,
You have so bounteous much of joy,
Though some of agony,
So much of peace 'tween hours of strife,
So many clouds that pass in sunny days,
And means that hush for roundelays,
So changeful much, oh, life.

Ah, life, dear life,
Holding so much of fettered hate,
Such stern, inexorable fate,
Yet, withal, tender friendships cheery,
Give me your snows if still above
The clouds shines warm the sun of love,
The love of my own dearie!

HOME AND SOCIETY.

The Responsibility of Mothers.

How few mothers fully comprehend the responsibility of their position! To them a soul has been given to train for a higher existence. A pure soul! and if it becomes stained, blackened and withered, whose is the fault?

Little sins, like little weeds, take root rapidly, and will grow and choke out the sweet blossoms of truth and innocency, unless, with never-failing earnestness and an unsparing hand, you sow the good seeds, and root out all the tendencies to sin and corruption.

The little child's soul may be likened to soft clay, and the characters which are engraved upon it must be daily retraced, with line upon line, until they become so indelible that nothing can ever efface them.

Characters traced in water are instantly obliterated—those traced on clay sink into the yielding surface—but they require the aid of the graver's tools to deepen the lines, else they, too, may be effaced.

So we must do our work faithfully and thoroughly if we would rejoice when the harvest comes. Then we gather in our sheaves—fair or foul—according to the seed we sowed in youth.

We sow in the morning of our lives, but we reap in our declining years—in pride and joy, or in utter wretchedness and woe.

Daily the observant mother recognizes her own faults in her children. She sees developing in them her own selfishness, pride, resistance to restraint, uncharitableness to others' failings, and deceit. These sins crop out among the fair flowers of their innocence, and she beholds them with dismay and sorrow. Alas! these hydra-headed serpents which have thrust their fangs into her heart, will now poison the sweet promise of her children's lives unless she can strangle them before they have grown too strong.

And, we would ask, what are the claims of society, compared to the holier claims which children have upon us?

Years pass away with great rapidity after the third decade is gone, and before we realize it, our babies are men and women, ready to take an active part in the battle of life and to work for the Kingdom of Heaven, or for what?

That is the question which is sometimes brought home to mothers with an agony exceeding any other that earth can give.

The bells of the town hall in many large cities are tolled for lost children, and the solemn knell strikes terror into many a mother's heart. But alas! if they were tolled for the children who are lost, utterly lost by the culpable neglect of parents, they would toll on for ages, and their echoes would never be silent. Lost—yes, lost! lost in the dram-shops and saloons of nearly every town and village in our land—lost in the dens of iniquity—lost in the prisons of every State!

Terrible are the records of sin! woeful the annals of crime! and yet where can we trace them but to the neglect of proper guidance and discipline in childhood—to the influence of the bad example of parents?

Our boys are led astray—they sin and continue to sin. If we can forgive the first offences and lead the offender back to the paths of right, well for him and for us. But if we throw him off, if we upbraid and threaten him continually, then we surely drive him to the bitter end.

Mothers, who groan over your work, whose nights are sleepless, and whose nerves are racked and taxed, seemingly to the utmost, think on these things!

"As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

Truer words are not to be found in Holy Writ. If irritable speeches, cross looks, and passionate rebuffs are the seed you sow now—be sure that the harvest will be of the same bitter nature.

But if self is put far out of sight; if throbbing pulses and aching nerves are soothed and stilled by thoughts of "One mighty to save, all powerful to succor," of Him who bore the cross so meekly, and said "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven"—then, oh, then, the harvest will bring you fully ripened sheaves, whose fruits will make your age to rejoice, and be glad.

But if you will not attend to the discipline of the souls given to your keeping, how can you expect that hirelings will do the work?

For children will soon rebel against the government of servants—and the mother will exclaim—

"Were there ever such children as mine? What shall I do with them?"

Forgetful that "the parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

Can we wonder at the undisciplined state and sinfulness of many of the children of the present day—when their parents are so forgetful of their highest duty?

How many daughters are lost in the giddy round of fashion—in idleness and selfishness—forgetting the obligations they owe to those who have toiled and watched for them from their infancy! And if they become wives, do they not continue in the same condition?

Happy marriages and happy homes are among the sweet dreams of our youth—but how rarely do we enter into their possession!

Experience, however, is our best earthly teacher; and God grant that it may teach many mothers to be more loving, considerate, and unselfish!

DAISY EYEBRIGHT.

SUNSHINE AFTER RAIN.

BY STANSBY.

The sky above is clouded,
The waves below are white,
The thickening mist has shrouded
The distant land from sight;
Yet, though the clouds may gather,
Our ship, in danger tried,
Can meet the stormy weather,
And bravely stem the tide.

'Tis past! the veil has lifted,
The sky again is blue,
And where the clouds are rifted
The sunlight flashes through.
Gone is the storm's commotion,
The danger past and gone,
And o'er the slumbering ocean
The ship sails bravely on.

So, when the shadows darken
Upon the Sea of Life,
Brave heart! to comfort hearken,
Nor fear the stormy strife;
The hope of brighter morrow
Shall gild the path again,
For joy comes after sorrow
As sunlight after rain.

OBSERVATIONS.

BY MAX ADELER.

—Chubb came over to see us on Wednesday night, carrying a paper in his hand. He looked very gloomy and perplexed, and when he had taken a seat he said—

"Adeler, do you know a man named Grubb—William B. Grubb?"

"Oh, yes," we replied, "very well indeed; he is an artist."

"Well, did you know that he had killed a couple of fellers?" asked Chubb.

"Killed two men?" we exclaimed in astonishment. "You really must be mistaken, Mr. Chubb."

"No I ain't, neither," replied Chubb. "He has hung a couple of men, and he has 'em hanging now on exhibition down-town there somewhere."

"There certainly must be some mistake about this, Mr. Chubb. Grubb is the most inoffensive man that we know of. He wouldn't injure a fly."

"I don't care," said Chubb. "This paper says he has murdered a couple of fellers. Listen to this." Then Chubb unfolded the paper and read as follows:

"The well-known artist, Mr. William B. Grubb, has just executed two very handsome marines, and he has them hanging on exhibition at his studio. Mr. Grubb has done his work in a very thorough manner, and we venture to say will enhance his reputation by his treatment of these subjects."

"There," exclaimed Chubb, "what d'you call that? I call it cold-blooded butchery for a man to hang two marines in his studio, and I call it outrageous for other people to go there to look at 'em. If there is any law in this land they will string Grubb up. He has no more right to kill a marine than any other man."

And Chubb, in a condition of great excitement, began to walk up and down the room. Gradually, as we explained to him that the word "marines" referred to marine pictures and not to the brave warriors who course over the bounding billows of the raging ocean, he became calmer, and before he went home he had so far recovered his self-possession as to borrow two dollars of us until the following Saturday. We entertain a fear that Chubb's conscience will not be as deeply troubled about that unreturned cash as it was about the murderous propensities of Grubb.

—A Wilkesbarre paper says: "We have no confidence in President MacMahon. He intends to betray his country as soon as he has an opportunity." We now see the importance of a free press. This man MacMahon has been cherishing a secret purpose to play the traitor, and he thought his design was undiscovered. But the eye of the Wilkesbarre editor was upon him. The eye of the Wilkesbarre editor penetrated his dark design and with dauntless courage the eminent journalist in question unmasked the conspiracy to the world! We can imagine how, when MacMahon receives that paper, he will sit down and weep and gnash his teeth and howl as he reflects that it is all up with him. If the Wilkesbarre editor has lost confidence in MacMahon then all is lost. There is no use of any man trying to go on under such circumstances. MacMahon must now resign and join a hook and ladder company or a brass band or sink into oblivion. Strange! how a single sentence from an editor will convulse a nation and make the mighty tremble! But it will; and advertisements even then will be inserted for only five cents a line.

—We have a gravel roof on our house and the other day some workmen were up there fixing it. They had a block and tackle rigged on the edge of the roof with a rope reaching to the ground for the purpose of hoisting the tar and gravel. Our girl was out washing the yard at the time, and somehow the hook on the end of the rope caught in her hoop-skirt as she walked past it. The man on the roof was discussing the Darwinian theory or the tax on rum, or something, at that moment, and seeing the rope shake he considered it was the signal to haul up, so, without looking over the edge, he began to wind the crank with velocity. A moment later the next-door neighbors heard fearful screams, and as they rushed to the windows they perceived an athletic exile of Erin swiftly ascending toward the blue ethereal vault of Heaven. The man at the crank fairly ached to look over and see what the noise was about, but he couldn't stop, he thought, until he got the bucket at the top. But he put on more vehemence, and in a moment he was amazed to see a human head adorned with red hair looming above the gutter spout. His first impulse was to let go the crank and run. But overcoming the earlier shock of fright he held on to the crank with one hand while with the other he seized a handful of the warm hair and hauled the owner upon the roof. We live in one of a row of houses which are joined all together, and they do say that the impetuosity with which that girl of ours charged upon the man who mussed her hair, and chased him over the roofs clear up to the corner, where he saved himself by crawling down the chimney fine, was at once impressive and exhilarating. She stood over that chimney expressing her views concerning the man's present character and future prospects until she was exhausted, when she walked home to our roof, lifted the trap-door, descended and went to bed. And when the man emerged and brushed the soot off of him he confided to his colleague, while distributing the gravel, that he would rather dive at once into the bowels of a burning volcano than to meet that hired girl again in a place where there was no chance to run.

—All the pews in our church were painted and varnished during the past month, and while fixing Dr. Clamm's pew the workman accidentally left a large splotch of varnish on the back of it. Last Sunday, Dr. Clamm's son, Johnny, had had his hair pulled once or twice during service by Bullet's boy in the pew next in the rear. After awhile young Mr. Clamm became quiet, and placed his head right against this one mass of undried varnish, while he amused himself reading over the ten commandments upon the wall just back of the pulpit. Presently he attempted to move, but the varnish had got among his hair and it held him tight. After making one or two desperate but ineffectual efforts to release himself, he became very angry, and supposing that Bullet's boy was holding him, he shouted out, "Let go o' my hair! Let go o' my hair, I tell you!" The minister paused just as he had entered upon the consideration of "thirdly," and the congregation looked around in amazement, just in time to see young Clamm with his head in *statu quo*, aiming dreadful blows with his fist at some unseen person behind him. And every time he struck out in this manner he screamed, "I'll put a head on you after church. I'll go for you, Bill Bullet, when I ketch you alone! Let go o' my hair, I tell you, or I'll mash yer nose," &c., &c. The deacon, who came running up, thought the boy had the nightmare and was talking in his sleep, and old Mrs. Jones in the pew in front screamed for the doctor, under the impression that Clamm, junior, was involved in a series of frightful convulsions, while Bullet's boy sat up at the end of his pew looking as solemn as if the sermon had made a deep impression on him. Finally the sexton took out his jack-knife, and sawed off enough of Mr. Clamm's hair to release him, and then dragged him out into the vestibule, while the victim kept glancing around at Bullet's boy, and shaking his fist at that urchin as if to indicate that he cherished deadly designs upon young Bullet. The contest, however, has been averted by an explanation, and we were glad to see, on Thursday, young Clamm playing hop-Scotch with Bullet's boy, in apparent forgetfulness of the sorrows of the sanctuary.

—The story related above about the marines, recalls an incident in the life of our old friend, the late General Mumm. The general was terribly absent-minded, and one day he sauntered into the studio of the celebrated marine painter, Mr. K. The artist was out at the moment, but standing upon the floor was a very large and very superb picture of the sea-beach, with the surf rolling in upon it. The general stood looking at it for awhile, until his mind wandered off from the present, and under the influence of the picture he gradually was impressed with a vague notion that he was at the sea-shore. So, still gazing at the painting, he slowly removed his clothes, and finally stood in a revery without a stitch upon him. Then he clasped his nose with his fingers, bent his neck forward, and plunged head foremost into the surf. The people on the floor below thought there was an earthquake. The artist came rushing in, and found General Mumm with his head against the washboard, one leg hanging from the ragged surf, and the toes of his left foot wriggling among the ruins of the light-house. The general could not get his hat on for a month, until the bumps subsided, and then he went around to offer to pay for the picture, but K. let him off. That dive was too great a tribute to the artist's genius for him to get angry at it.

—McDougal received a check for $500 some time ago, and before he could have it cashed he lost it. To make himself safe he sent to the banks to have the check stopped, and then he advertised it and offered a reward of $50 for its return. On the next Sunday he found the check just where he had put it, in the pocket of his best vest. So on Monday morning he went down to get the money for it. He was not acquainted with the officers, and when he presented the check, the teller looked at him, and whispered to one of the clerks, who instantly went out. Then the teller pretended to be counting the money over slowly. Presently his eye lighted; the clerk entered with a policeman; the teller jumped over the counter and collared McDougal; the clerk seized him by the leg, and the policeman hit him over the head with a club. Then they got McDougal down and the crowd stood around, while the policeman searched him. The more he kicked and screamed and struggled, the harder they held him, until at last when they had emptied his pockets and torn nearly all his clothes off, the policeman dragged him up the street to the station-house, followed by a crowd of small boys, who whistled on their fingers and criticized the appearance of Mr. McDougal. After awhile he was taken before an alderman, and at last he was permitted to explain the situation and prove his identity. He says now that only one thing in connection with the tragedy troubles him, only one thing: he can't exactly understand how that policeman could have had the unblushing and brazen impudence to come to him when he was discharged and demand the $50 reward, on account of the trouble he had had trying to make things comfortable and correct.

—A Pittsburgh paper, commenting upon the operations of a certain investigating committee, remarks that "the end is reached at last." We do not want to appear too dreadfully particular, but we may be permitted to observe that it would have been extremely odd if the end had been reached at first. It is generally reached at last, unless you commence at the end and conclude at the beginning: and even then it is a matter for discussion whether the end in such a case is not really the beginning, and the beginning the conclusion. The matter is not important, but a man who goes out of his way to observe that the end is reached *last*, is likely to startle the public sometime or other with some such remark as this: "Mr. Jones's vital spark having fled, he breathed his last and then rolled over and expired, and as his spirit passed gently away he entered the valley of death and gave up the ghost, and in a moment he was no more." We want to prevent this kind of thing if we can.

—We see in the papers that a man in New York proposes to keep canal navigation open all winter by heating the water by means of iron-pipe through which a current of hot water is passed. A Norristown journal suggests that this will be a good thing, if for nothing else because it will prevent the ice becoming so cold as to be uncomfortable to sit on. But we may say, seriously, that we doubt the feasibility of the pipe plan. Our method would be to make all the canal-boats red-hot, and to keep them running up and down, by means of incandescent mules. And if this should not be efficacious, the water might be made hot with mustard, smeared along the bottom of the canal. A mustard-and water canal would be interesting merely as a curiosity; and in cases of sudden stomach-ache among the bold navigators of the boats, it would be very convenient. All a sufferer would have to do would be to dive overboard and lay himself upon the mustard at the bottom and stay there until he got well. A friend at our elbow suggests that the tow-path might be taken up and replaced with a warm cast-iron tow-path, which would keep the water from freezing, while the old towpath could be cut into lengths, the pieces laid side by side, and sold to somebody as a farm. But this is treating the subject with too much levity. If we can't consider the matter with proper solemnity we will decline to allude to it at all.

THE TRYSTING.

BY LOUISE SCHEPLERN.

Within the garden, while the roses slumber
In liquid moonlight clear,
And all the earth is wrapped in dewy silence,
My lady's step to hear,
I wait impatient, sure, she will not fail me,
She never yet hath failed
To keep her tryst, but night is slowly waning,
And Ethan's oath hath paled:
But silvery serene, she looketh on me—
Dear Ethan, dost thou know
The rapturous pain of mortals or the pallen
Cutathromed seas of woe?

Perchance, in yonder curtained chamber, sleeping
In crystal garments white,
She lies, forgetting love's watch is keeping
Through all the dewy night.
Tell me, ye whispering winds that near her wander,
How fair my lady seems,
Like to a snowy lily, which, in slumber,
Of sweet South zephyrs dreams.
My lily! oh, my spotless virgin lily!
If in thy maiden sleep,
My name in love's dear accents low thou breathest,
A sin for earth too deep!

Oh, sorrowing aspen, trembling, ever trembling,
One moment still thy grief,
The while, in breathing forth my love in sighing,
My heart may find relief.
And all too mournful is thy fitful warbling,
Oh, plaintive bird of night!
Hiding from restless day thy shrinking sorrow,
Too sensitive for light!
The chords responsive in my throbbing bosom
Vibrate and thrill again;
Faint with the fragrant sighs of sleeping roses,
Joy merges into pain.

How strangely gleams the moonlight on the roses,
So long the night, so lone,
Listen, methought I heard a footfall stealing,
So light thy step, my own.
No, 'twas the western wind that, faintly sighing,
Breathes through the darksome bough,
No longer hope, so late untasted trysting
My lady comes not now.
See, where the moon, betwixt the columns shimmering,
Lets fall a wand'ring beam,
Or is it—stay, oh foolish heart, thy throbbing—
It is her white robe's gleam.

JESSIE DALE,

The Conductor's Daughter;

OR,

The Plot Against the Pennsylvania Railroad.

BY BURR THORNBURY, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF "ST. LEGER'S LOVE," "RAVENSWOOD," "SKALE, THE SCOUT," "AGNES AYRE," ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

A MYSTERIOUS FRIEND.

After he had eaten his breakfast, Jay Marbury in no pleasant mood went out for a walk. He wanted to calm himself and to reflect as to his best course. The result so far of his private machinations had been very unsatisfactory. The presence of Jasper Gray had a private plot too. Jay Marbury felt uncomfortable. None are so quick to suspect unfair dealing as those capable of it themselves. Therefore Marbury was ill at ease in his mind, despite his satisfying breakfast, which failed to have that soothing effect upon him that a luxurious meal is said to have upon the animal man.

Meanwhile something was transpiring at the house he had left.

The mute Duffy had borne a note from Jasper Gray to Mrs. Rowland, requesting, as a favor of importance to herself, an interview in the parlor. She could but grant it. She thought of him as one who might become her friend.

"I will see you," she wrote back, and very soon she descended once more to the lower parlor.

The gas was burning still; the shutters were closely fastened; and there was no one in the apartment when she entered, but Mr. Gray was only a moment or two behind her.

His manner seemed disturbed, almost agitated.

"I come as a friend," were his first words to the prisoner. "Have no fear in my presence, Mrs. Rowland, nor in the presence of others, if I am near."

"Oh, thank you, sir," she returned, gratefully, strangely thrilled by the grave, good tones of his voice. It seemed as if she had heard that voice before. She looked at him in questioning earnestness.

"Why am I here, would you ask?" he said, with a serious smile. "Why am I the associate of dishonest and dishonorable men?"

"Yes," she said, timidly. "You cannot be in actual league with such?"

"Nor am I," he answered, plainly. "I am a wolf on the track of wolves."

"Ah! a detective? One employed to unmask this cabal of corporation plunderers?"

"Not that exactly. But I have insinuated myself among them without exciting suspicion, and I may at last be enabled to hand some of them over to the law. But that is not my chief object."

He paused as if he expected his hearer to question him.

She did not, and he proceeded:

"I am only a self-seeker after all. This junto, or some powerful members of it, has done me private wrong, and I seek to exempt myself from the long consequences of that wrong. But I must first learn if there is a single human heart to be trusted. I have heretofore thought that I had been deceived by one whom I believed was truth itself; now I have hope that it was not so."

Mr. Gray was growing mystical, but he appeared to be deeply in earnest.

"Has Jay Marbury asked you to marry him?" he asked, with much abruptness.

"He has," said Mrs. Rowland, with blushing scorn.

"And you would not listen to his suit?"

"Not voluntarily; I am a wife; he could but insult me."

"But he declares that you are widowed; if not by death by desertion."

"My heart is loyal to him who once loved me, and who still would, had not base deception separated us."

"You believe him true in heart then?"

"I do, and ever shall. He was noble, even as others were base."

Mr. Gray seemed more agitated than ever. An uncontrollable tremor shook his whole frame.

"What if he should believe you false?"

"He does, I fear, else he would return to me."

"Have you any hope that he will?"

"None whatever," she said, despairingly. "I have no hope now but to escape being made the victim of another's lust for gold."

"Do you know what Jay Marbury's scheme is?"

"To make me his wife, I suppose, that *he* may claim my fortune through me."

"I think he loves you."

"Loves me! what is the love of one like him worth?"

"But if you were to marry him you could escape a union with one morally and physically foul. You know Kimball Matthewson?"

"He is in soul and body a leper," she said, with a look of loathing.

"Jay Marbury can save you from the degradation of a marriage with such a man—such a creature rather. His plan is to abstract from your once reputed father's papers the proofs of your real parentage—which Belmont Matthewson undoubtedly possesses, and then induce you to become his wife. I, as an accessory to the plot, am to receive five hundred thousand of the millions of dollars which await in chancery your claim."

"You cannot, I am sure, lend yourself to the furtherance of such a wicked scheme."

"I can and will, if you will only give your approval of it."

"You insult me, Mr. Gray, to propose such action on my part," said Mrs. Rowland with something like the old fear and disgust she had felt for Jay Marbury. This man, after all his kindliness and apparent honesty, was only a smoother hypocrite than the rest—he was only trying to win the promised five hundred thousand in the easiest way.

"I do not intend to insult you, Mrs. Rowland," he said in a tone that somehow reassured her in spite of her rising distrust. "I do not urge this action upon you; I only show you how you may escape a greater degradation. If you do not become the wife of Jay Marbury, he will certainly endeavor to deliver you into the hands of your old persecutors."

"And will you not save me from that fate?" she implored.

"Perhaps—perhaps, Mrs. Rowland," he said with real or well simulated emotion, "you will marry *me*, and go by that door to safety?"

"No, no; I will do nothing dishonorable. I may be made the victim of wrong, but I will not consent to my own degradation. *I am a wife*, Mr. Gray, and nothing can win me from my allegiance to my loved though lost husband."

Mr. Gray had arisen. Again he seemed powerfully moved.

Mrs. Rowland regarded him strangely. A subtle sympathy drew her toward him—she felt that he would yet serve her and save her.

"I will leave you," he said, abruptly. "But I promise for the time to protect you, Mrs. Rowland. Have no fear while you remain in this house." And with a bow he went out.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A STRANGE PRISON.

The quickly-conceived and daringly-executed plot to abduct his rival was, as we have said, undertaken by Cecil Parnell more in the spirit of reckless delight in anything of the kind, than in the hope that Harry's relatives would thereby be led to suppose that he was dead.

Cecil certainly did not think the fraud would be long undiscovered by Harry's relatives—his father or whoever might seek for him. He *did* hope and calculate, however, that the Dales would not for a considerable period arrive at the truth of the matter. He knew, or believed at least, that the two families had had no intercourse with each other except through Harry; and with him removed, they would probably still remain apart. Their social positions were so different. Mr. Lester as a director of the Pennsylvania Company might know Mr. Dale as an employee, but nothing more.

In the meantime, before by any possibility the facts of the fraud he had engaged in came out, Cecil hoped to have supplied in the heart of Jessie Dale the place of her lost lover. She would forget her grief in the presence of himself. Cecil's sanguine nature made all this seem plausible. Even if he fell in the favor of Mr. Dale—as he already suspected he had fallen—he trusted to regain the conductor's favor.

Harry Lester was now in this young plotter's power, and at his mercy. He was in positive danger, for if Cecil failed to achieve the object he sought, he was at least determined that his rival should not enjoy that felicity; and in his jealous disappointment, should Jessie prove unyielding in her love and loyalty to the millionaire's son, he might become dangerously revengeful.

When Harry Lester came back to consciousness after that long lapse of sensibility induced by the shock he had received in the railroad disaster—and lengthened by opiates administered by his cunning enemy—he was as painfully and bewilderingly affected as ever human being was before.

He was alone in a small and obscure apartment, that looked dismally like a vault, certainly near some great city thoroughfare, for he could hear the subdued roar and rumble of crowded life outside—a circumstance which his confused faculties at first associated with the noise made by a railway train. He remembered *that*—the fact of his having left his home by rail—but in a dim and dizzy way, for he endeavored in vain to recollect to what place he had been travelling.

The jerking jar of the down-plunging train—the cries that so suddenly and terrifyingly arose—the blind awful sense of a disaster having occurred—all these came in quick succession to his mind.

"There must have been an accident," he said audibly to himself; "and I was injured."

He raised his hand to his head, where a burning pain now began to be felt. "I was wounded; but why am I here alone in this strange place? Perhaps," he continued, a little preposterously—but who will wonder at him?—"perhaps I *were killed*, and—and—"

Harry looked just then very much like a child that is frightened suddenly out of its sleep, but becomes immediately assured that there is no great danger.

"Oh, no, not that!" he smiled. "I'm not in the next world yet."

He felt in his pockets. Perhaps he was seeking for the picture of Jessie Dale, to make the realization of his continued earthly existence still easier. If so, he did not find what he sought—but he did find some difficulty in getting his hands into his pockets, for they (the pockets) didn't seem as familiar to him as they ought to feel.

"I wish somebody would come and tell me who I am and where I am," he expressed himself a little petulantly.

"What time of day is it?"

He looked at his watch. It had stopped, but if ever a watch was justifiable for doing that, Harry's was—it was dented in the case as if a bullet had struck it.

"I'm tired of this state of things," declared Harry, in increasing uneasiness and impatience. "If somebody doesn't come without, I'll bring them."

And forthwith he became demonstrative.

This had its effect, for the oddest little elf of a man that Harry had ever dreamed of, presented himself. He made our young hero think of gnomes and earth-men.

"What's wanted?" piped the dwarf.

"I want to know where I am?" replied Harry, with some asperity of tone.

"You're safe," said the little man.

"That's not satisfactory. Who brought me here? What city am I in?"

"You know you *are* in a city?"

"I hear the bustle and roar."

"True; any fool might reason as far as you have done. You are not a great distance from Broadway."

"I am in New York, then? Speak, you little wretch, and enlighten me further."

Harry felt irritable and indignant. He did not like the tantalizing manner of the dwarf, and had no patience with him.

"You're a prisoner," said the latter, vindictively.

"A prisoner:"

"Yes, my young sir."

"How is that? Tell me, or I shall go mad."

"Go mad if you want to; I guess they won't care."

"I *won't* go mad. By whom was I brought here, and with what object?"

"By my employers; I serve them without questioning."

"Was I not injured in a railroad accident?"

"It's no harm to tell you that much; you were."

"And I was carried here insensible?"

"How well you remember what you never *knew*," laughed the little ogre.

Harry, in spite of himself, owing to his weakened condition, began to feel depressed and strangely concerned.

"You had better not talk any more now," said his attendant. "I will bring you food and drink."

He disappeared, and soon returned with some refreshments, of which Harry partook. His anxiety to obtain some sort of an understanding of his position led him to further questioning, notwithstanding the advice of his jailer to refrain therefrom.

"I would be greatly obliged to you," he said, "if you would inform me why I am here."

"I do not know," asseverated the dwarf, sharply. "I know nothing but to do my employers' bidding. I do not live in the world—I live *under* it. I never go into the street—the boys hoot at me, and all others stare or smile. I am an odd, misshapen, ugly creature; *but I make a good and safe servant*," he concluded, significantly.

"And you are employed in evil work, I take it," said Harry, not without a shiver, as he vaguely thought of the secret junto named by Beatrice Rowland—of a possible plot to intimidate or coerce his father by this seizure of his own person—of schemes he had heard whispered to obtain unwilling votes or resignations or connivances at monstrous frauds—and lastly of the supposed secret foe who had already, as he believed, attempted his assassination in firing that audacious shot through the window of Mr. Dale's parlor.

Of all these things Harry thought, and a chill stole over him till he trembled. All the rumors and indefinite conjectures concerning a powerful secret organization of gold-armed and gold-seeking villains, at which he had only hitherto laughed as fanciful figures, now seemed to him like realities.

Nor were his apprehensions as applied to his immediate situation, unfounded, for he was in the power of Belmont Matthewson as well as of Cecil Parnell, the latter having decided to give his rival into the keeping of the arch-villain of the junto, where, as the son of Ellis Lester, he would be particularly safe.

As for Cecil himself, we may as well say here, he was already back in the Quaker City, thinking more of Jessie Dale than of anything else. He knew that Harry was out of his way for a time, and he intended to make the most of his absence.

How long Harry would remain a prisoner—if indeed he were ever released except by death—depended now in a great degree upon the will of Belmont Matthewson, who, as we shall see, had designs of his own in relation to the captive.

Harry's great anxiety was to ascertain of his keeper, if possible, in what sort of a building he was confined, and its location in the city. It seemed to him that it must be a subterranean apartment, for no light of day was visible—a lamp relieved the obscurity of the place—and he felt that it was low, and shut from the wholesome air of an upper region. Yet the world and freedom could not be far away, for the subdued roar of the hurrying life of the great city came to his ears. He therefore questioned the dwarf, but obtained no satisfaction, for the little fellow told him he had talked too much already.

The next day he renewed his inquiries, and with more success.

"It may satisfy you," said the dwarf, surlily, "to know just where you are, and then you won't be bothering yourself with thoughts of escape. You can't get away; you need not cry out in the hope of having some one hear you, for I will always be near to answer first. Ha! ha! you will find me a faithful jailor. I'm an odd, demonish little wretch, and you might think there was no place nor work in the world for me, but I have both. Ha! ha!"

The latter was not what our hero most desired to hear, though he was repulsively interested, nevertheless, in the creature's account of himself.

"But will you not inform me in what sort of a place I am confined?" he asked.

And the dwarf answered quite gleefully:

"You are down among the treasure-vaults and fire-proofs—a safe place to hold a prisoner. It's a private banking-vault, this, but we make different uses of it. You're not the first one that's been here. It's a queer world, my fair sir—you wouldn't guess half that's done in it underhand."

"I guess enough now," returned Harry. "I am in the power of that infernal junto at which I have heretofore only laughed. There is villainy afoot more gigantic than was ever before known, and I am made a victim, perhaps, that others may be handled through me. But you will fail in your evil designs, if you think to use me as your instrument. I will die here rather than aid you in any way. I hardly know what to believe or suspect, but I am convinced now of the existence of an organization of corruptionists who think themselves strong enough to defy law and attempt any evil."

"You will be further convinced on that point," laughed the dwarf, unpleasantly, "before you are released from their hold. No man leaves their hands until it is *safe* for them to give him his freedom again. I tell you this, young sir, because I see you are obstinate and plucky; you will have to become tractable, or your stay here will be neither short nor agreeable, unless—"

"Unless you choose to make it very brief indeed. I suppose, and cut my earthly career as short as the railroad disaster merely missed doing."

Again the little imp laughed and ogled.

"Will you furnish me with a paper containing an account of the accident?" asked Harry.

"I can oblige you that far," was the reply, in what our hero thought was rather a malignant tone, notwithstanding the readiness with which the request was acceded to.

The dwarf disappeared from the place, and soon came back with several copies of different journals of late issue.

Harry took one, and seating himself closer to the lamp, perused with the most eager interest the account it contained of the disaster.

He saw, too, what others had seen—his own name among the killed!

His sensations, as he beheld this announcement, may be imagined. Then succeeded the most painful and agitating reflections. Was he dead to the world, dead to his parents and friends, dead to *Jessie?*

Agonizing thought! Not till now did he realize the utter helplessness and seriousness of his situation. If he were supposed to be dead, no outside aid would ever reach him. He grew sick at heart as he contemplated all this.

A vision of his sorrowing mother came to his mind—and of sweet Jessie Dale, mourning him as dead. He had not even the solace of her picture—how he deplored the loss of that!

His head drooped over the pages of the journal he had been reading. His despondency, increased no doubt by his weak physical condition, was extreme. After awhile he raised his head and looked around upon his dungeon walls. The dwarf had silently withdrawn.

"Hopeless must be my position here," he mused. "Look at these iron-doors and heavy locks! this grim and lonesome vault! I wonder that I do not perish for want of air; but ventilation must be specially provided me. And through the same opening comes that dull roar of life and trade. But let me listen! I hear it no longer; night must have fallen, and the free feet that lately passed me so carelessly by, have gone. Hark! what sound is that?"

He bent his head in an attitude of eager attention. Now that he realized that day was over, the lonesomeness of his situation seemed doubly increased. The least sound was welcome, for it indicated some lingering human presence. Down among the treasure-vaults! a prisoner *of war*—of the war for unjust gain! The thought was chilling; it was as bad as to be in the catacombs.

Listening, Harry distinguished a sound very unlike any that he had heard before. It did not appear to come from the street, but rather from a depth lower even than the level on which he himself was.

It was not long before, with a start—and almost an exclamation of joy—he decided upon its cause. That peculiar dull, boring sound was not to be mistaken. *Burglars were at work tunnelling their way to the vaults supposed to contain treasure!*

"I will let them continue their labor," said Harry, to himself in a glow of excitement. "If their object is to enter here, after they have broken through I will frighten them off and escape! Oh, Heaven send that they *do* direct their operations against this chamber! What a startling secret I hold! My little jailor, I trust you will not visit me by night and discover it. I may be free yet! I may be free yet! It is villain against villain; I may escape between them. How long will it be ere they are through? It may be weeks—no, hardly that; their work is well advanced. These solid walls are yet to be passed, however, at least. I must be patient—patient."

The word was aspirated in a hot breath from the young man's lips; his excitement was intense. And well might it be, for when was such strange deliverance before extended to a prisoner?

All night long the labors of the subterranean workers continued, with only brief intervals, perhaps of reconnoissance, interrupting their monotonous and invisible advance.

The dwarf did not visit the vault, and so the secret was safe for at least another day.

With the coming of what Harry presumed was the morning, the sounds ceased, to be renewed, he did not doubt, when night came again.

His great anxiety now was to be assured that the burglars were intending to enter the vault which was his prison.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE IRON HAND REACHING FOR GOLD.

About noon of the day following his strange and important discovery, Harry Lester received notice from his attendant, the dwarf, that the chief of the junto desired to see him, and that he would be conducted by a private way to the private office of the magnate in question.

Harry had been furnished an abundant and excellent breakfast, his wound gave him less pain than it had been doing, he had obtained some sleep, and altogether, especially taking into consideration his prospect of deliverance, he felt fresh and almost jubilant.

And now he was to be taken into the presence of the great head of the corporation vampires! This of itself was enough to arouse and enliven him.

"You will be taken to an upper office," said the dwarf; "but you are warned to make no outcry nor effort to escape, for the slightest demonstration of that kind will bring you into trouble."

"Will *you* pounce upon me and silence me?" sneered Harry, who, though he would be the last one to ridicule personal deformities, could not refrain from making this contemptuous query, because of the pompous threatening of his diminutive attendant.

The dwarf scowled malignantly, and muttered first something like a curse, and then this intelligible reply:

"You would feel strong hands upon you. Do not laugh at my weakness; I am only a small limb of a great power."

"I do not doubt that," said Harry. "Lead on; I am anxious to see this prince of villains."

"You are bold. You may think yourself favored in being permitted to go to him at all—you are the second prisoner only who has held audience with him. But I may say the privilege is not a desirable one, unless you are willing to give in to his demands, whatever they may be."

"Let us go," said our hero, impatiently.

The dwarf looked at a watch he carried, a small and beautiful chronometer, saying:

"There is a minute to spare yet; we will wait here."

Harry smiled at a conceit that entered his mind.

"This is a nineteenth century dwarf, to carry a watch! I suppose he can afford it. The little imp! where did his masters ever find him? How shrewd in them to choose such a servant, though!"

"Now," said the little fellow when the time was up, "we have one minute to give to your blindfolding yet, and then you will be—"

"Am I to be blindfolded?" interrupted Harry, in surprise.

"Yes, and securely; you might turn up as a dangerous witness some day, though I don't think it likely."

The two left the vault. In the first open space they came to, after going through a narrow ascending passage, the operation of blindfolding was performed by a man whose features were masked.

Then with a curious feeling, compounded of fear and amusement—for Harry could hardly forget that this was *not* buffoonery—he passed on and entered the very office we have before seen.

Simultaneous with the entrance of Harry came Belmont Matthewson, his cold white face wearing an expression somewhat of triumph.

"Sit down, young man. Grif, give him a seat," he said. "You are the son of Ellis Lester, of Philadelphia?"

"I am," replied our hero, "and you, I make bold to say, are Belmont Matthewson, the greatest rascal in Christendom."

"If that distinction belongs to me," returned he, calmly, "it would become you to treat the power into which you have fallen with respect, for I tell you, my fair young sir, the greatest rascal in Christendom is not to be regarded with levity."

"It is not only my custom but my principle to yield respect only to honesty," was Harry's noble retort.

"We will waive anything further of that sort," said the great corruptionist, in his cold, even speech. "You have called me Belmont Matthewson; on what presumption do you address me so confidently by that name?"

"On the presumption that none but the powerful villain Belmont Matthewson is whispered to be, would treat me in the outrageous manner I have been treated."

"Let me inform you, young sir, that it was *not* by my direction that you were brought here. I knew nothing of any design to deprive you of your freedom until I was informed that the son of Ellis Lester was in our hands."

Harry, had he been permitted to, would have looked his surprise and incredulity.

"Nevertheless," continued Belmont Matthewson, "the intelligence was agreeable to me. I think we can make use of you, sir."

"And I think you will find me as hard to mould to your wishes and purposes as you do my father," said the young man, bravely.

"Do not put too much confidence in your powers of resistance," said the arch villain, coldly and threateningly. "You little understand our determination and resources if you believe you can balk us in our designs. Though I admit," he added, "that if your father's nature holds strong in you, we may find you a difficult subject."

"I am proud to believe that my father is an incorruptible man—one whom neither bribes nor menaces can move against his convictions of right; and I trust, whatever be your intentions respecting me, I may be enabled to withstand, even as he would, blandishments, promises, seductions, threats and even torture, for I verily think you are capable of the latter."

Matthewson smiled his cold, faint smile.

"Would you fancy an imprisonment, perhaps of years, rather than your freedom on certain conditions?"

"The conditions would certainly be dishonorable, not to say villainous. I would die in the vault into which you have thrust me rather than become accessory to your wickedness."

"And do you think that your father—invulnerable to every other influence we can bring to bear upon him—could resist making certain surrenders if he knew that his son was languishing in a living grave, and that his deliverance could be purchased only in that way?"

"That is your game, then? I guessed as much; but let me assure you that it will fail. My father would give his *own* life rather than lend himself even as a passive agent in schemes of wholesale robbery, and I trust that even the sacrifice of his son would not be counted too great a one to make in the cause of right and for the blessed sake of justice."

"How you prate, boy! You little know the weakness of a parent's nature. You little know also the flimsiness of this so-called principle that sets itself in opposition to enterprising—"

"Villainy," interpolated Harry, with quick disdain.

"Call it what you will, but talk not of honesty. Every man has his price. Because your father is already the possessor of millions, the price we have offered him has not the attraction in his sight it would otherwise have. But he shall be made to give way yet. I comprehend the age I live in, and I know the men not affected with its spirit—which is that of gain—are rare. Might made right in the feudal days, and in these utilitarian times the same stern custom is equally honored in men's hearts, though conventionalities often restrain its exercise."

Harry Lester listened to these words in mute wonder, under which a mighty indignation heaved like a sea. Was this man a monomaniac on the subject of gain? Had success in greed so corrupted his nature that the infection had extended even to his mind? The enunciation of such unholy principles—made with such evident earnestness—shocked and alarmed our hero. Never had he met with such *honest* dishonesty; villainy seemed sanctified by a faith in its right to existence. And then the declarations he had heard made! Was this man's spirit indeed the spirit of the age, as it would appear if it were laid as bare as his? The thought for the moment was appalling. Peculation, fraud, bribery, defalcation of the basest kind—and *called* defalcation instead of robbery—corruption in courts and congresses, in corporations and individual instances, the domination of "rings" and venality in every station—were not all these prevailing, and was not the land filled with the cry of corruption?

Then the soul of our young hero rose strong within him. His blinded eyes, if they saw not outward objects, saw at least the heinousness of dishonesty—the hideousness of the appalling picture of moral ruin presented—and saw, moreover, that there *were* a hope for the land. Drawing himself to his full height, with hand uplifted toward Heaven, he proudly and eloquently said:

"You asperse the character of the age, Belmont Matthewson. You judge all others by the low standard of self. Young as I am, with as little experience as I have had in the business world, I yet count my faith as better and truer than your knowledge. There *is* honesty among the people; there is a *lore* of it, far surpassing the soulless considerations of policy. Greed exists, but in rottenness that shall prove its own decay. The lust of gain extends not to all, though the love of possession may. But if the truth were approaching the darkness you would have it, I tell you a light yet lingers which cannot be put out, but which shall prove the illumination of the mass. God's holy influence still warms the human heart, and sentiments of right and justice are by it kept alive. And if the corruption that has reached you were to sweep like a pestilence still wider, its breath would be harmless to many; if the power you wield were tenfold increased, it could not crush all those who oppose you. It may, perhaps, make *me* your victim, but with the grace of Heaven I will become, if necessary, a martyr to that cause which has never boasted of martyrs, but which may need them as much as any other—the cause of honesty and integrity in the business world!"

"Bravo! sir knight of a plebeian cause!" exclaimed Belmont Matthewson, derisively. "How patiently I have listened to you! but now I will put you to the test. In the first place I notify you that for the sake of security to ourselves in case you should by any possibility escape, I wish to make it appear that you are *one of us*, and to that end shall request your signature to certain papers. I do not expect that you will immediately yield to my demand, but means will eventually be found to compel you."

"I will never yield to such subserviency as that," cried Harry, indignantly; "cunning villain that you are, to seek so to compromise and disarm me."

"We shall see what your action will be," said Matthewson, with his usual quietness, ignoring the well-applied epithet. "In the meantime I shall commence new operations against your father. We are determined to force him into compliance with our wishes, or to compel his resignation as an officer of the Pennsylvania."

"Audacious scoundrel! You shall not succeed; you will find us both invulnerable to your wicked measures! Perhaps, though, you will try assassination again."

"Your father bears a charmed life," said the arch-villain, with unwavering coolness.

"As you have found in your attempts against it! Coward and assassin! I will at least have a view of your cruel face!"

He tore furiously at the bandage that encircled his eyes, but a strong hand was instantly upon him to prevent his achieving his object.

Indignation raged in Harry's bosom like a tempest. Oh, if he could only bring retribution upon this man of villainies and crimes!

"Take him below," directed Belmont Matthewson. "His spirit is too rebellious. Give him martyr's fare hereafter, and we will see what effect that and confinement will have upon him. His blood runs too rich in his veins just now."

And so our hero was remanded to his prison, but as he was conducted from the office, there was a glow almost of triumph on his face, and if his eyes had been unbandaged their light would have revealed his glorious spirit more fully to the tyrant-chief of the junto.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 12.)

CLAUDIA'S TRIUMPH.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU,

AUTHOR OF "THE COST OF CONQUEST," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A PRISONER.

What wants the bird, that from his wiry prison
Sings to the passing travellers of air
A wistful note? That he were with them, sir.
—*Tobin.*

There was nothing wanting to Lady Nortonshall's comfort when she arrived at her husband's splendid castle after her melancholy journey. A bright fire blazed in her comfortable dressing-room, and everything was in its ordinary nice trim; her bedroom, too, and the little ante-room adjoining wore their usual air of luxurious comfort and neatness.

The rest of the house seemed dark and dreary, and the staircase struck cold and chill as she passed up it, attended only by Mrs. Jones, the housekeeper; but her husband's orders had been scrupulously fulfilled, and once in her own cheerful rooms, she left cold and solitude behind her.

"Will you come down-stairs again, my lady?" Mrs. Jones asked; "or would you prefer to have some refreshments up here? I have your own rooms on the ground-floor also ready for you."

Alma sighed as she thought of those pretty rooms—how, five months back, she had occupied them, the honored mistress of the castle and all in it.

In the breakfast-room she had read of Frank Vavasour's return from peril and danger; and how kind her husband had been, or seemed to be, about it. Now, all was utterly changed. She was here again—Lady Nortonshall still, wife of the owner of the soil, mistress of the mansion which, but for her fortune, would have passed into other keeping long ago—a slighted, insulted wife, a prisoner, and this woman her gaoler. She fancied that the housekeeper regarded her with malicious curiosity, and that her respectful tone was only assumed to cover contempt.

This made her feel hard and cold to the old lady, who, in reality, felt nothing but sincere sympathy for the forlorn young creature before her, and she only replied, shortly—

"I prefer not to go down, thank you."

"Will you allow me to take your things off, my lady? You have brought no attendant with you, I see."

"None but Brown," Alma replied, with a bitter laugh; "and though I have no doubt he is the very model of valets, he is hardly qualified for a lady's maid."

"Dear, dear," Mrs. Jones said, sympathizingly; "you must let me make up for it, my lady. I'll wait on you with pleasure. I'm not too old to be handy, you will find."

But Lady Nortonshall was not to be mollified, and she answered, stiffly, and somewhat haughtily—

"I require no attendance, thank you, Mrs. Jones—a prisoner usually waits upon herself."

"A prisoner, my lady!"

"That was the word I used."

"But—"

"There's no *but*," she replied, with a tone of scorn. "My residence here will be, to all intents and purposes, that of a prisoner—every comfort, every attendance, but no liberty. Have I not guessed my husband's injunctions aright?"

"My lady, I—" the housekeeper began, startled at the accuracy of the guess, and hardly knowing what to say in reply.

"I see I have," Alma went on, in the same cold, hard tone. "Of course, you will only do your duty in attending to your orders; but in the meantime I shall dispense with your services. I shall require nothing more to-night."

"No refreshment whatever, my lady—not even a cup of tea?"

"You may send me that if you will—nothing more."

But Mrs. Jones did not send it; she took it herself. She prepared it, and set it out in as tempting a fashion as she could, and went up with it as gently and respectfully as though her ladyship had treated her with all her former courtesy.

She did this to save her from prying eyes, for every servant in the house was eager to get an excuse to look at their mistress, who had returned under such strange circumstances. She felt for her sincerely, and she would not allow her to be stared at.

Alma merely thanked her, signed to her to put the tray down, and turned to the fire again without a word. She had taken off her travelling attire, and sat with her hands in her lap, staring listlessly at the glowing coals in the polished grate.

There was so much dejection in her listless attitude, and so much weary hopelessness in the pale face which looked so sadly at the bright blaze, that the good woman's motherly heart was touched.

"Poor dear!" she said, as she busied

herself with the teacups. "If she would only talk to me, or let me talk to her. Shall I pour it out, my lady?"

"Please."

Not another word, and she wheeled the little table close to the forlorn Alma's side, with her heartfelt pity almost brimming over her eyes in tears.

"She'll maybe come round by and by," she thought to herself, "and open her heart to me. I'd comfort her, poor thing, if she'd let me. I am sure it would do her good to speak."

She lingered for a moment; but Alma did not speak again, or betray any further consciousness of her presence, so she softly closed the door and left her to herself.

She found her master's valet waiting for her down stairs at a comfortably-spread table. Mr. Brown dearly loved a good meal, and never failed to do justice to the good things at Nortonshall whenever his master's business took him there.

"Well, how is she?" he asked, when the housekeeper returned. "Is she pretty quiet and reasonable?"

"She's as quiet as a stone, and as hard," the housekeeper replied; "but maybe she'll change again. She used to be as sweet-spoken as she is pretty, poor lady, when she was here before."

"And so she is now. Whatever may have happened, I will say this for her, she's as sweet and gentle a lady as any one could wish to attend upon. One part of the journey down I thought she was losing her wits, and I wished myself well through the affair, I can tell you; but when I went into the same carriage with her she was as gentle as a lamb, and as polite to me as though I'd been a lord. It's a queer business, and I can't make it out."

Mrs. Jones sniffed, and pursed her lips very tight, as though she would like to say something if she dared.

"A very queer business," the valet repeated, stroking his chin.

He was very anxious to know Mrs. Jones's opinion on the state of affairs, and he had not long to wait. She ruffled her feathers like an indignant hen, and spoke her mind on the subject emphatically.

"It's a queer business and a wicked business, Mr. Brown, and I don't believe a word of it. It's a hard thing to say of one's master, and maybe you'll go and tell him of it; but he's a hard, bad man, and it's my belief he's doing all this to my lady for his own wicked ends, that I do, and there's my mind."

"I'm not one to carry tales to my master, Mrs. Jones—a little more sugar, if you please; thank you—nor do I think him a good man any more than you, but I'm very much afraid there's truth in the affair."

"Nonsense! He's wicked enough to make up anything."

"He didn't make this up."

"H'm!"

"He didn't, indeed. It's quite true, I'm sure of it, that—"

"What! That he caught my lady, that poor, innocent thing, up-stairs yonder—"

"In another man's arms. Yes, that's just it. It's plain speaking, but it's true. I'll thank you for the pepper. This is a fine, tender steak. Some of our own beef, I suppose?"

"Yes, yes; one of the lot off the Wentwold farm. But about my lady? How do you know it isn't all lies together, this fine tale?"

"It's no tale. I only heard what my lord said, and he was in a towering rage; but it was true, for all the house was talking about it. He can't keep his own counsel when he gets into a passion."

"Nor at any other time, I think. From a boy he was always terribly quick with his tongue. Try a bit of the cold pie, Mr. Brown. Richard Barton shot the pheasants last week, and they seem in prime condition."

"Not a morsel more, thank you; just a cup more tea, if you please. It was a cold journey here, and it seems to warm one."

Mrs. Jones poured out the tea, and, like a wise woman, held her tongue now that she had set that of the valet going. She knew she had said just enough to make him talk, and that she should hear all she wanted in the course of time, for Brown loved a good gossip as well as any one, and generally confided to her without scruple all that was going on.

"Oh, I'm afraid there's no doubt about it" he went on at length, after sipping his fourth cup of tea. "The young gentleman, Mr. Vavasour, was at Westerpark—there's no denying that—and there was going to be a duel; but my lady said, coming along, that— But there, poor soul, I half think she went off her head, for I don't see how she could have done any thing in the matter."

"What did she say?"

"That I need not trouble myself about my master, for that he was quite safe; there would be no duel—she had stopped it."

"Why, I thought you said she was locked up all the time?"

"So the folks at the inn told me. My lord brought her straight in from the lodge, and locked her in her room. She must have sent to him in some way."

"I hope to goodness nothing has happened between them; it would be an awful thing for either of them to be cut off with their hearts full of evil passions."

"We shall soon know," the valet said "If anything has gone wrong they will send to London, and then some one will be sure to telegraph to me. But I think my lady was positive, from the way she spoke."

Mr. Brown's heart was set at rest presently, as far as his master's safety was concerned, by a telegram which he received from him commanding his return to London instead of Westerpark. It was dated from his lordship's town residence, and the communication contained nothing that could betoken any sort of catastrophe.

In the servants' hall, gossip ran high on the subject of Alma's sudden return, and the preparations made for it, and various conjectures were hazarded as to the reason thereof. Most of them were of opinion that there could have been no quarrel, or their master would not have had so much fuss made about his wife's reception; but one or two of the older ones, who had been in the service of the present lord and of his father before him, were inclined to a somewhat different way of thinking.

"Don't tell me," said the coachman, a hard-featured, grim old Yorkshireman, who had grown gray at Nortonshall, and hoped to die in his place. "Poor thing, she's offended him, somehow, and he'll never forgive her. I know the Nortonshalls well. It's been always the same—father and son—from one generation to another. They can smile and speak gentle words, and be as quiet as a cat with her claws covered, but there's always mischief brewing for all that. My lord wouldn't like the world to say he ill-treated his wife, so he sends word here that she's to be received with all honor, and she comes here to weary out her young life like a trapped bird in a golden cage."

"But what can she have done?" asked the cook. "It's all nonsense, coachman. My lady came down here for the sake of her health, that's all."

"Nortonshall's a queer place to send any one to get health on the edge of a hard winter, and that's what this one will be, Mrs Cook," the coachman replied, a little nettled. "However, time will show."

"Yes, it will," she retorted; "but whatever it shows, I'll never believe that pretty creature has done anything wrong."

"Perhaps not; but she's in trouble and disgrace for all that."

"Poor thing!" said two or three voices.

"Ah, 'poor thing,' indeed," said the cook. "What can she have done to anger his lordship?"

"Loved some one else better than him, I fancy. I asked Brown coming along He's a close chap, that Brown—very close; but he couldn't help letting out enough of the story for me to get hold of, and give a good guess at the rest. Poor young thing! I can't help but be sorry for her."

"Aye, if it's all true about her marriage with my lord," said one of the footmen. "When I was in London at the time of the wedding, I heard all about it, and my lady—"

"Would not like her affairs discussed here, I am sure," said a voice behind them, and turning their heads they saw with dismay Mrs. Jones standing in the doorway. "You may be thankful it was not Mr. Brown who overheard what I have done," she said, severely. "Coachman, he wants you in my room to give you some orders about to-morrow morning. Cook, have something tasty for my lady's supper in half an hour. She took nothing with her tea, and I must try and persuade her to eat. Maria Marsh, go and see to the fires up-stairs, and tell her ladyship that I shall have the honor of attending her till her maid arrives; and all of you, once for all, let me beg that I hear no more such rubbish as you have just been talking. It would annoy my lady very much if it came to her ears, and as for my lord—well, it would be a short stay any of you would make at Nortonshall if he heard it."

She sailed out of the room, her black silk dress rustling as if with the consciousness of the importance of the wearer, and left them all subdued and silent. They knew what she said was true, and that any tittle-tattle repeated to their dreaded master would procure them instant dismissal from Nortonshall, characterless and forlorn.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A LULL IN THE STORM.

He met a weary and a waning face,
That tried to smile, indeed, but could not smile,
And saw the tears where never tears should be.
—*Buchanan.*

Mrs. Jones went up to Lady Nortonshall's room with a tempting little supper on a tray. She would not let any of the servants carry it up, for she felt very sorry for her young mistress, and was anxious to shield her all she could from prying eyes and inquisitive tongues.

Alma's mood had quite changed in the time she had sat up-stairs alone. The hard, passionate, somewhat sullen spirit in which she had repelled all the housekeeper's attentions had passed away, and left her nothing but hopeless sorrow and terror. She had partially undressed, and let down the heavy braids of her hair. She had been brushing and arranging it for the night, when the sense of her loneliness came upon her so strongly that she let the brush fall from her hand, and burst into passionate tears.

It was thus Mrs. Jones found her, sitting before the bright fire in her soft white dressing-gown, and looking so forlorn that the good-natured woman's heart was touched.

"Poor dear," she said to herself; and then, depositing the tray she held on a stand, she went up to the drooping figure, and touched Alma's shoulder. "My lady," she said, quietly.

Lady Nortonshall raised her head, and strove to resume her former coldness and *hauteur*.

"What is it?" she said, shortly, and endeavored with all her might to still her quivering lips and keep down the choking in her throat.

It was no use. Her grief must have way, her spirits had given way utterly, and she could only bow her head on her hands again, and weep on with choking sobs that made the old housekeeper fear that she would go into hysterics

"My lady," she said, taking one of Alma's cold hands respectfully, and chafing it, "I have brought your supper. Try and eat something. You are quite overdone."

"I can't eat," Alma replied. "I want nothing but to die and be at rest."

"Hush, my dear—hush!" the old lady said, speaking as though her forlorn mistress were a child of her own. "Don't cry like that, my poor child. It will all come right some day."

Mrs. Jones's large heart really overflowed at her eyes in sympathetic tears as she watched the piteous grief of her master's wife. Guilty or not, she was a forlorn creature thrown upon her care for sympathy, and she should have it. She would have given it to the vilest creature on the face of the earth had she seen the need of it.

"Hush, hush, my dear," she said again, forgetting that they were mistress and servant, and seeing only the sorrowful woman before her. "You will make yourself ill if you cry like that."

"I can't help it," sobbed Alma. She was quite prostrate now, and hardly knew what she said. "You are very kind, but I cannot help it. It's all so lonely, and I'm so frightened. Has he sent you word to murder me in this lonely, dreadful place?"

It was plain that her agitation and fright were getting the mastery over her, so Mrs Jones sat down beside her, and took her in her motherly arms as though she had been her own daughter, letting her weep out her fears on her bosom.

"No one shall harm you in this house," she said, soothingly; "no one wants to. You're just tired out, and no wonder. Let me help you to bed, and then try and eat a little bit of supper. You'll be all the better for it, if it's only a mouthful."

Alma protested again that she could not eat, but Mrs Jones was so gentle, and tended her with such loving care, which she was too weary to refuse, that by and by she was persuaded to eat a mouthful or two, and drink a glass of hot negus, and by the time this was done her calmness and self-possession had almost returned, and she was able to talk quietly and rationally once more.

"You are very kind to me, Mrs. Jones," she said; "far kinder than I expected. I know I was coming to a prison, but you have managed to hide the bolts and bars."

"A prison, my dear! I beg your pardon—I should say, my lady."

"Oh, don't beg my pardon. Call me my dear—it sounds kind, and Heaven knows I need kindness. It sounds like what a mother might say. Ah, I have no mother to care for me!"

"Poor dear—it's a sad loss is a mother."

"Yes, isn't it? There's no one in all the wide world to think of me, to care whether I live or die—except one," she added, under her breath, but the housekeeper caught the words.

Alma saw by her look she had heard what she had said, and the hard look came back to her pretty face.

"Yes," she repeated, "except one. I will say it, Mrs. Jones—there's no one else, and it don't much matter now. It won't be for long"

"My dear, is it wise to talk of it—even to think of it?" the old lady said, quietly. "I don't believe you have done anything wrong—nothing shall make me think it; but chance words are treasured up sometimes and do mischief when we least expect it."

"You won't make mischief, and I shan't talk to any one else. Oh, it's a hard thing to be alone in the world with those who should be kind to you all harsh and cruel It's all a dreadful mistake, my coming here in this way; but my lord wouldn't listen to a word I could say, though I told him the simple truth and nothing else—Heaven knows I did!"

"There, my dear, it will all come right some day, be sure of it—truth always triumphs in the end."

"Yes, but broken hearts and blighted lives are apt to come first. What the better of truth's triumphs shall I be if its song of victory is sung over my grave? And if such an end ever comes to my miserable history as the truth coming to light, it will come too late I shall be dead, with the odium of broken vows lying heavy upon me under the green turf."

"Oh, no—don't think that."

"I do. You think me wild and crazy when I talk about being murdered; but it is in his heart. My death will be accomplished by some means."

"My lady!"

"Ah, you good soul, don't look so horrified at me; you don't know your master yet. Don't go away. Let me tell you the whole wretched story, and then you will understand my fears."

"They are only fears, my dear, be sure of that."

"I'm not sure. I tell you I know what Lord Nortonshall has in his heart as well as if I were on my death-bed, dying by his hand. Let me talk to you as I should to my mother, if I had one, and try not to judge me too harshly when you have heard all."

"Let me beg of you to go to bed first, my lady, and then I will sit by you as long as you like; you are quite worn out."

"I could not sleep I feel as though I should never sleep again," Alma said; but she suffered herself to be persuaded, and in a few minutes was laid in her luxurious bed, with Mrs. Jones sitting by her side.

Then, holding her sympathizing hand, she told her all—everything about her marriage and her lover's subsequent return. Then came the story of the neglect and wretchedness which had been her fortune of late, and lastly the whole history of the untoward meeting with Francis Vavasour, which had led to such disastrous results

"I couldn't make my husband believe me," she sobbed, "but it's true, indeed it is. He wouldn't believe Mrs. Eversfield either (that's my aunt, you know), and I daresay you don't think it's true; but it is."

"I do believe it, my dear lady, and so will my lord, be sure of it Before twenty-four hours have passed over his head he will come to his senses and fetch you away, and till then I will do my very best to make you comfortable and happy."

"Thank you—you are very kind. I may be able to return it some day. If I can I will. I am afraid I was very rude to you just now, but I cannot tell you what I was feeling. It seemed as if I should go mad left here by myself."

"I can guess what you felt. You shan't be left alone any more, except when you wish it. Can I do anything more for you now?"

"Nothing, except to tell Mr. Brown I am very grateful to him for his kindness to me on the journey. No gentleman could have behaved with greater delicacy. He is going away soon, I suppose."

"To-morrow morning, my lady."

"Aye, to tell his master how his prisoner has behaved, and to ask for further directions, I suppose. Well, I don't think he'll have much trouble to report. I was pretty quiet, for I could see he was fully prepared to use any measures if I had been rebellious. Good-night, Mrs Jones; let me thank you, too, once more You don't know what your kindness may have saved me from."

But the housekeeper would not leave her till she had seen her sink into a profound sleep, the result of the fatigue and agitation of the past two days; and then she went down-stairs to Brown with tears in her eyes, for she had daughters of her own, and she pitied the forlornness of her young mistress.

"Poor thing," she said to the valet, "I do feel for her, and I don't believe the story my lord tells about the matter."

"She'll try to make every one believe her, of course," Brown replied; "but even if it's true, she's much to be pitied—that is, as far as I can make out. I never rightly heard the story."

"Nor I, until to-night. She told me all about it, and it made my heart ache to hear her."

And forthwith kind-hearted Mrs. Jones told her lady's story to Mr. Brown, who heard it with much interest to the end.

"Then Mr. Vavasour was not the coward my lord said he was," he remarked; "I never could fancy it somehow, after that shipwreck affair. Ah, poor things, they are both to be pitied."

And the sympathetic Brown heaved a great sigh, as though he would have the housekeeper think he had had his experience and suffering, too, in his young days.

The next morning he left Nortonshall for town, leaving his respectful adieus for his lady, and to his surprise found that his master had completely altered his mind.

Apartments for her ladyship were forthwith to be prepared in town, and her husband seemed in a terrible hurry to have her there.

He asked but few questions about the journey, and those few were abrupt and hasty.

"Did she go quietly?" was his first query.

"Quite, my lord."

"All the way?"

"Yes."

"Made no fuss on the road?"

"None."

"Nor at the castle?"

"None that I knew of."

"Mrs. Jones had everything ready?"

"Everything, my lord. My lady was quite composed and comfortable—she told me so before I left—and she was kind enough to say she was obliged to me for my attention on the journey."

"Ah, I daresay my lady can be most amiable when she chooses. Look here, Brown; I've altered my mind about her."

"Indeed, my lord."

"Yes; her ladyship comes to town as soon as I can get ready for her."

He gave his valet no reason for his sudden change of determination, nor could that valuable ally arrive at any satisfactory conclusion in his own mind.

Lord Nortonshall's manner was so changed, so peculiar, so utterly calculated to repress all questioning, that his familiar and confidant could make nothing of it, try as he would.

"He means mischief," he said to himself, "I'm sure of that—and if I could only find out what— But I'll keep my weather eye open, as the sailors say, and if it's any harm to my lady, poor soul, I'll find some way of circumventing it, or my name's not Brown—see if I don't!"

In a very few days, apartments, handsomely furnished, were ready for Lady Nortonshall, his lordship announcing to all whom it might concern, that his wife was coming to town, and that until his town house should be ready she would occupy them.

There were three people who heard this announcement with mingled feelings of dread and curiosity, and awaited with anxiety the course of events. These were Austin Bertram, Francis Vavasour, and Claudia, the latter of whom, though she had come to regard the peer with loathing and horror, forced herself to receive him with smiles and apparent pleasure, thereby sending him into the seventh heaven of delight, and causing not a little gossip and scandal among the friends of both parties.

Poor Claudia! Her hitherto unstained name suffered severely at this time. None save Frank—and him she had sworn to secrecy—knew that she had a powerful motive for acting as she did; and the censorious world set it down that the peer's presents and flatteries had done their work at last, and that Claudia Wynne was only another of the weak-minded women who cannot resist the sparkle of a diamond, or the soft syllables of a flattering tongue.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CLEOPATRA'S JEWELS.

As the stream, late concealed
By the fringe of its willows,
When it rushes revealed
In the light of its billows;
As the bolt bursts on high
From the black cloud that bound it,
Flashed the soul of that eye
Through the long lashes round it.
—*Byron.*

Perhaps no one was more surprised than Lord Nortonshall himself at the change in Claudia's manner to him. He met with warmth and apparent friendship, when he had heretofore received nothing at her hands but the most marked coldness and distrust.

His presents—and he made her many—were all accepted with seeming gratitude, and his compliments and attentions were permitted without repulse or denial.

True, the lovely actress never wore any of the magnificent gems he presented to her, either upon the stage or at home; but she was ready with her answer when he questioned her, as he often did.

"I am not fond of jewelry at home," was her answer, "unless it is for full dress, which you know I seldom wear; and as for the stage, your gifts are far too valuable for me to run the risk of having them lost in the theatre. Handsome jewelry is far too great a temptation to be safe in such a place."

"But I should so like to see you wear something, if only once—that rose diamond, for instance, with the antique setting. It would exactly suit some of your costumes. Do try the effect of it some night, Claudia, *ma belle*."

"And every lady would know it for one of your family jewels, and cry shame on me for wearing what should adorn your wife," Claudia thought to herself: but she did not speak her thought, though her eye flashed and her cheek flushed with indignant scorn at the man she would give so much to propitiate.

"Won't even diamonds tempt you?"

"Not even diamonds, my lord."

"But why? Jewels are necessary on the stage, and surely real gems—"

"Ah, that is a mistake, Lord Nortonshall. You were going to say that real stones must be better than false ones. They are not, and that is my great reason for never wearing them in my business. Real gems are not half so effective as shams. Paste and foil look infinitely better than diamonds behind the glare of the foot-lights."

"But surely some of them—this necklace, for instance— Oh, Claudia, when I bought it I thought of that gorgeous Eastern costume of yours, and hoped to see it on your neck. Will you not grant me this little favor? I would do anything in the world for you."

Claudia thought of the poor wife pining in her enforced seclusion, of her own strong reason for wishing to be in Lord Nortonshall's confidence, and, lastly, of what the world would say at seeing a gift of his on her neck.

She knew that the ornament must be familiar to many eyes; she herself had seen it nestling on its satin cushion in Storr and Mortimer's windows not many days before, and had admired its fantastic beauty The world could not say much more against her good fame than was already in the mouths of her calumniators, and with a sharp pang at her heart she put that idea aside.

It was hard to be misjudged—to have her highest and holiest motives so sadly misunderstood, and her name bandied about from lip to lip as that of a woman who had been bought by gold at last; and she knew perfectly well that all this, and more, would be said of her; yet for the sake of Francis Vavasour, whom she loved, and for the sake of the woman who loved him, and to whom his heart was given, she was determined to brave it all.

Her object now was to gain the *entrée* to Lord Nortonshall's house, and to get into his confidence—and she knew him to be just the man to reveal his inmost heart to a woman—and find out, if possible, if her terrible thought were correct when she discovered the loss of the contents of her casket.

That he fully understood the deadly nature and speedy, secret operation of the poison, she knew only too well. One day she had opened the little box before him, never dreaming that he had ever seen the inside of it, and told him all about the present, the giver, and what the phials contained. Her heart grew sick with fear and horror when she linked together the thought of her loss and the terrible words the angry man had spoken of his innocent wife.

She could not help feeling sure of the dreadful purpose which was in his heart, and she determined, at any risk—even that of the loss of her good name—to defeat his intent.

It was hard, with such a whirl of thoughts and feelings running through her breast, to give even a polite answer to her lordly wooer, but she was determined to propitiate him, and assented to his request.

"I will wear it if you wish, my lord," she said, gravely "Let me see, I play Cleopatra next Tuesday. It will suit my dress exactly."

He was enraptured with her for her promising, and the next morning there came to her residence a massive pair of bracelets and some earrings to match the necklace, with a passionate note imploring her to wear these also and make her costume complete.

Poor Claudia! she loathed herself as she put the finishing touch to Cleopatra's toilette, and stood before the glass in her comfortable dressing-room with the bright light flashing from the cut surfaces of the many-colored gems that adorned her. The dress was one that well became her, and the jewels were in perfect keeping with it. Her appearance was a signal for a tumultuous burst of applause, which she scarcely heard, so busied was she with her own thoughts. The necklace seemed to burn itself into her neck, and the sparkling stones in her ears to hang like lumps of lead in their setting, for Lord Nortonshall was in the stage-box, and two or three gentlemen with him, and she knew only too well how she would be spoken of. Nor was the stage box the only portion of the theatre in which the ornaments were recognized and commented upon

Right in the middle of the dress circle sat a young wife whose husband was said to be very stingy, and who had a florid taste in dress, and a coarse, brusque maimma, but plenty of money to gloss over her sins of omission and commission. Her husband was down in the stalls, leaving her to her mother's care, and in a very few moments after Cleopatra's entrance she gave that lady a sharp nudge.

"I say, ma!"

"Well?"

"Look there!"

"Where?"

"At that woman's neck—she's got the necklace on."

"What necklace?"

"Why the very one I wanted Jack to buy for me. There couldn't be two like it—I am sure it is the same."

"I think it is," said the mother, putting up her eyeglass; "and to think of an actress—a brazen faced hussy, I'll be bound—having it. Think of her being able to buy necklaces!"

"Boy is!" ejaculated the younger lady, with a shrug and a tone that spoke volumes. "*She* never bought it, I'm sure."

The lady's husband recognized the jewels from the stalls. He was talking to no less a person than Mr. Austin Bertram, who occupied his usual place. He looked pale and worn, and acknowledged to being out of health, but still went about his old haunts pretty much as usual, and he had come to see Cleopatra, having heard something about the promise Claudia had given Lord Nortonshall to wear his gifts.

"There's more in it than I can fathom," he said to himself, as the actress came on the stage, the gems looking like a line of many-colored lights round her throat "She doesn't like Nortonshall. I've seen her shiver at the touch of his hand, and there's repugnance in her eyes every time she looks at him, and yet she courts him openly and incessantly. I must know what it means. I'll find out her reason, or my name's not what it is, that's all."

He was roused from his revery by hearing the gentleman at his side exclaim "By Jove!" in a very audible voice, which made him turn round.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but I was so surprised."

"At what?"

"Do you see that girl's necklace?"

"La Claudia's? Yes."

"Well, I was wondering how she came by it. It was one my wife took a fancy to at Storr and Mortimer's, but I couldn't afford it, they asked such a price for it."

"I know the price of it," Mr. Bertram said, with a smile. "Lord Nortonshall was the purchaser."

"And gave it to her?"

"Even so."

"And that's the girl every one said was such a prude Well, well, only one construction can be put upon her acceptance of a gift like that. His lordship must be a rich man to be able to do it."

"His marriage made him so."

"A pretty way to spend his wife's money. She knows nothing of how it goes, I'll be bound, poor thing! So Mademoiselle Claudia is no better than the rest of her precious sex, after all, it seems. I thought the shining light of her virtue wouldn't stand diamonds, and all that sort of thing, very long"

"You thought truly, it appears, from what we see. Lord Nortonshall has been the highest bidder, and the prize is his—at least he says so."

Mr. Bertram wished his companion good-night as he spoke, and left the theatre. He was really ill—worse than he would acknowledge to himself—and his head throbbed so much that the lighted stage and its shifting figures seemed all shadowy and confused as he looked at them.

"I must not be ill now," he muttered, as he staggered into the fresh air; "there's a grand *denouement* approaching, and I want a clear head to see it. Besides, one is apt to tell tales in illness, and that would never do."

He shivered so violently as he spoke that he was fain to lean against the wall to recover himself, and the very feeling brought back to his recollection the night of Mr. Bouverie's murder, when he could not go out to aid the searchers from an attack something similar. The recollection became terribly vivid as he stood with chattering teeth, vainly trying to steady himself.

"Ugh!" he muttered, "it's an ugly thing to think of! I must have some physic and see if I can't shake off this low fit."

He hailed a passing cab, and was driven to the address of a physician whom he knew intimately. Dr. Clarke was at home, but somewhat cross at being disturbed out of his proper hours He grew pleasant and complaisant enough when he found who his visitor was, and invited him up to his own sanctum, where it was not customary for patients to be admitted.

"Not to-night, doctor," Mr. Bertram said; "I'm out of sorts, and I want you to give me something that will set me up—quickly, mind—for I've lots to do and think about."

"All right, my boy. What's the matter? Describe how you feel."

The symptoms were detailed, and Dr. Clarke looked very grave.

"To set you up quickly won't be so easy as you think. Why, what have you been doing with yourself for the last five months, for this mischief has been going on quite as long as that I am sure?"

"Thinking a great deal, dissipating somewhat, eating very little, and sleeping less," was the concise reply.

"Ah, I thought so! Well, I'll save you from a sharp attack of brain fever if I can; but I won't promise. Get this made up and take it at once, then go to bed, and don't get up till I see you to-morrow. Why, man, your pulse is going at a frightful rate, and your brain is whirling to cotton-pond, I can plainly see."

"I think it is. Tell me, doctor, if I am ill as you think I shall be, shall I be delirious? Shall I say things and not know what I am talking about?"

"In all probability you will; it is a natural phase of the disorder."

"Save me from that," he said, vehemently, "and you will win my eternal gratitude. Prevent me from losing my senses, and if you make your bill six times your usual charge, I'll pay it gladly and thankfully—only promise me."

"I'll do what I can," Dr. Clarke replied; "I can only promise you that much. Lose your senses," he said, as his visitor departed. "You have nearly lost them already. You'll be as pretty a case of brain fever in a day or two as any doctor could wish to handle."

Austin Bertram got his prescription made up at the first chemist's shop he passed, and then went home. He followed Dr. Clarke's advice and went to bed; but his troubled sleep was full of delirious fancies, and ere the morning he was far away in the spectral world of fever-stricken imagery, talking wildly of things long gone by, and revealing strange events of many buried years.

(*To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 9.*)

A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

Mr. Raymond Barr was one of the members of a club noted for the excellence of its dinners; he had luxuriously furnished apartments in the most desirable quarter of a fashionable hotel, a blood horse in the livery stable around the corner, and, what was more, he possessed an income that fully supported these delightful adjuncts of bachelorhood, and left a margin. The consequence of all this was that when Mr. Raymond Barr reached the age of fifty, more or less—probably more—he—having never had a better-half to teach him that life has thorns as well as roses—was an intolerably selfish individual.

Mr Barr's only living relatives were two nephews—sons of different brothers These nephews were odious in Mr. Barr's eyes—one because he disdained to ask for assistance, the other because he was always wanting to be assisted.

One bright May morning, Mr. Barr arose in his usual, self-satisfied state of mind little dreaming that his complacent equanimity was about to receive a very severe shock.

He had scarcely begun, morning paper in hand, to sip his chocolate with calm content, when a waiter brought in his letters.

It was not Mr. Raymond Barr's custom to read his letters before breakfast, but on this occasion his attention was attracted by a large white envelope bearing the Paris post-mark. He tore it open and read—

"My Dear Friend—Before this reaches you, I will be probably lying in Père la Chaise. I am dying. It is strange that I have lived so long, considering what my life has been for the last few years. The exciting race for wealth—the feverish gambling of the Bourse, would have long ago exhausted my vitality, had I not been upheld by one motive—the desire of providing for my only child Petronille. I have succeeded partially On my death Petronille will have 200 000 francs."

"Who the deuce *is* he?" asked Mr. Barr, looking for the signature, "Howard Bulwer—Howard Bulwer—umph!—I had forgotten him. We were intimate in Paris some twenty five years ago; but what are his family affairs to me?" He resumed the letter, however:

"If you, Raymond Barr, have not lost all remembrance of your youth, when as poor students we swore eternal friendship in that garret of the Rue St. Benoit, I implore you to become the protector of my beloved daughter."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Mr. Barr, starting up wrathfully. "The impudence of the fellow! Merely because we struck up a romantic friendship in the days of our puppyhood, he appoints me his daughter's guardian. I won't stand it. I'll write, and decline to act. If every beggarly American who goes abroad and marries, can thrust his child on anybody he chooses, we've come to a pretty pass—a pretty pass indeed!"

Having taken several turns up and down the room, he again took up the letter:

"Petronille is now at Miss Lemmins's boarding-school at Nantes. I confide her to you as I have neither kinsmen nor friends here or in America. My wife is dead, and I have quarrelled with her relatives. From some of our countrymen in this city, I have discovered all about you. I feel that you deserve my trust. Be a father to Petronille, and receive a father's blessing."

Then followed a postscript dated two days later. It was in French:

"M. Pierre Lafripe, legal adviser of M. Howard Bulwer, is under the painful necessity of informing M Raymond Barr, that his estimable client yielded to the embrace of death shortly after inditing the above letter. Enclosed will be found a copy of the last testament of the defunct, and also an account of investments, &c.

"M. Lafripe begs leave to add that Mademoiselle Petronille Bulwer will to-morrow embark for the United States, probably arriving in New York shortly after this epistle."

"Good gracious!" cried Mr. Barr, aghast, "'Probably arriving in New York,' and coming here of course. What will I do with her? What on earth *will* I do with her?"

He rubbed his fingers through his fastidiously arranged hair—a sign of great mental disturbance, and hastily glanced down a column of the newspaper.

"I'm in for it," he said with the calmness of despair, "A steamer is due to-day—perhaps it brought this very letter. I'll have to go and meet her." And he groaned, "My appetite is entirely gone. Why did I open that confounded letter before breakfast?"

Precisely at twelve o'clock Mr. Raymond Barr left the Grand Hotel, faultlessly attired, but carrying a heavy heart beneath his broadcloth and fine linen.

Was he, who laughingly admired well-dressed ladies, at a distance, to have his Sybaritic ease interrupted by an unformed young female fresh from school? His excited imagination conjured up horrid pictures. She might fall in love with him, and die a victim of unrequited affection. She would probably use his choice papers and engravings as materials for curl papers and bustles. He had heard of such terrible things. Is it strange that the poor man shuddered?

He reached the pier in safety, and it was singular that he did, for in the wretchedness of his mind he walked recklessly under the heads of at least a dozen horses. The steamer was already in. Mr. Barr wondered why steamers and other things always come punctually when one does not want them

He found the captain, and asked for Miss Petronille Bulwer. Over a pile of trunks he was introduced to a young lady in black. This young lady stepped gracefully past the trunks and held out her

small hand, the glove on which looked—I think the phrase belongs to Charles Reade—as if it had been "moulded on." As she raised her veil, he beheld a pretty girlish face, with a dimple and blush rose color on either cheek, and the most innocent dark-blue eyes in the world.

He had expected to see a gushing French school-girl who would have embraced him, and bedewed his immaculate shirt bosom with tears; but here was a beautiful, self-possessed young woman!

She took his offered arm, saying a few words with a pretty foreign accent, and they proceeded to the carriage, followed by a sturdy Breton bonne.

They were scarcely seated in this conveyance when a cold perspiration broke out on Mr. Barr's brow. He had forgotten to order rooms for his ward and her attendant! Unhappy man! This was the climax to his morning of disasters.

He gazed about him in agonized perplexity. He caught sight of a familiar face in the crowd. It was that of Ralph Barr, his nephew. Now, Ralph Barr was not in his uncle's good books, for two reasons—Ralph was poor, and Ralph was independent. But drowning men will grasp at anything or anybody—even at nephews whom they despise. Mr. Barr threw himself half-way out the window, and gesticulated to such an extent that Marie, the bonne, observed—

"Your guardian is a maniac, ma'amselle, like the rest of his compatriots." Marie's experience of Americans in France had led her to conclude that all the inhabitants of our free country were more or less insane.

Ralph at last saw his uncle, and became aware that these signals of distress were being made with the object of attracting his attention. He approached the carriage, raised his hat to Miss Balwer, and then lent an attentive ear to the whispered tale of his uncle's dilemma. Mr. Barr proposed that Ralph should enter the carriage, while he himself went on ahead, to order the rooms to be prepared. Ralph made no objection. Mr. Barr ordered the driver to take a long circuit, in order to give him time. He then got out, Ralph taking the vacated seat.

Before the carriage-wheels had turned half a hundred times, neither Petronille nor Ralph cared how long the journey might last. What two sensible young people would not try to be mutually agreeable under such circumstances?

Ralph was a handsome, open-hearted young fellow, with a vein of pleasant humor in his nature, and Petronille a damsel who could not help being charming. What but a very delightful flirtation could result?

At first Marie looked severely on the interloper, but when on cross-examining him she discovered that he preferred omelette and galette to beefsteak and potatoes—which latter dish she firmly believed to be common to all barbarians—she allowed herself to be mollified.

Ralph attempted to be witty. Petronille smiled, and finally laughed. Marie was shocked. To think of a young girl laughing two weeks after her father's death! The impropriety deserved rebuke; Marie accordingly said something about "votre père."

The dimples died out of Petronille's cheeks at the words; a sad, thoughtful look came into her eyes, and Ralph could not win another smile from her.

When they reached the hotel, he asked permission to call the next day to inquire after her health.

Petronille saucily replied that she didn't think a half-hour's ride would have any serious effect on her constitution; however, if he were very anxious, he might call—to see his uncle.

Ralph said that he was very anxious, and that he would certainly call,—but not to see his uncle, he added to himself.

"You are too mild with young gentlemen, ma'amselle," observed the privileged Marie, after he had gone. "You must keep them at a distance, or they won't respect you. For example, ma'amselle, look at me; when Pierrot Foyer said he liked me better than any girl in my village, I just took off my sabot, and knocked him on the head with it. And what was the consequence, ma'amselle?" pursued Marie, triumphantly. "What was the consequence? Why, he has never trembled me since!"

Having thus delivered herself, Marie began the pleasant employment of comparing her present surroundings with those to which she had been accustomed to at home—much to the disadvantage of the elegant apartments which Mr. Barr had provided.

A week passed. Mr. Raymond Barr was agreeably surprised to find that his ward gave him no trouble whatever. She generally remained in her own rooms, meeting him only at tea. She at first made some gentle overtures—such as lighting his meerschaum and bringing his slippers—but Mr. Barr, who preferred the attentions of his valet to those of any woman alive, rather discouraged these services.

The selfish old sinner congratulated himself on the fact that Petronille's father had died so recently. It obviated the necessity of taking the young lady to concerts, operas, etc. He invited her, however, to ride in the Park.

"I thank you, monsieur," she answered, blushing with pleasure at this unexpected condescension on his part, for, distance adding enchantment to the view, she regarded her guardian as one of the wisest men living, although a little cold—"I thank you; but I have already engaged myself to ride this afternoon."

"Engaged yourself?" repeated Mr. Barr, in surprise.

"Is not that what you call it? I mean that I promised Monsieur Ralph, your nephew, to ride with him."

"The deuce!—ahem! I must say, mademoiselle, it seems a little singular that you should accept the young gentleman's invitation without—"

"And is it not the custom here?" interrupted Petronille, naively. "I did assure monsieur, your nephew, that in my country young gentlemen and ladies do not ride alone together—that is, without a chaperon—but he answered me that here it is different."

"I'm not objecting to that," said Mr. Barr, dubiously; "but I was not aware that my nephew had called on you."

"Oh, yes, several times, but you were always absent at the times. He has asked for you often, and he appeared très triste that you were not at home—he remained very long waiting for your return."

"Oh, no doubt," murmured Mr. Barr, sarcastically.

"If you wish it," continued Petronille, with ill-disguised anxiety, "I will excuse myself—"

"You may as well go, having promised. Consult me, however, before accepting another invitation, if you please."

Petronille flitted out with a relieved look, and was soon heard trilling a waltz from Crispino in her own room.

"Things have gone pretty far," concluded Mr. Barr, for he had heard Ralph's whistle that waltz a hundred times.

Mr. Barr was too wise to provoke revolt by open opposition, so Petronille arranged a toilette which excited the envy of many a fair dame that afternoon, in spite of its sombre hue.

That ride in the Park was to Petronille and Ralph a glimpse of Elysium. If love's young dream only hadn't such a bubble-like habit of bursting when brightest!

Now, Mr. Raymond Barr had a little plan arranged in his mind. He had another nephew, Richard Barr—an industrious, plodding fellow, who worshipped money, loving pleasure and dissipation next—provided they were cheap. This nephew was at present in Cuba, managing a business affair of his uncle's. As a reward, Richard had plainly hinted that he expected to be started in business on his own account.

But Mr. Barr was of a frugal mind—when others were concerned.

"My ward has about $40,000 well invested," he reasoned; "if I marry her to Richard, he will be provided for, and I'll save money; therefore, Petronille Balwer shall become Mrs. Richard Barr. Le roi le veut!"

But when Mr. Barr discovered that Ralph had got ahead of him, he was perplexed. To forbid Ralph the house might lead to an altercation, and Mr. Barr hated anything disagreeable. And yet he must find some way of separating the two, until Richard's arrival. The latter was too busy to come just at present. It would not pay to bring him on the scene. Besides, Mr. Barr doubted whether Richard would appear to advantage when contrasted with Ralph.

After much deliberation, he concluded to send his ward back to Nantes—to the care of Miss Lemmins.

Mr. Barr briefly communicated his intention to Petronille, who assented silently. Poor Petronille! her short, bright dream was over, and a sad, wistful look came into her eyes as she gazed on a certain photograph, and then tenderly placed it among the leaves of her prayer-book. She might never see him again!

It must be admitted that these young people had made boy when the sun shone. Things had gone pretty far, to quote Mr. Barr, in a short time.

Her tears would drop softly on the articles she tried to pack, and Marie's sharp eyes *would* see their traces on the silks and muslins. The bonne relieved her feelings by scolding her mistress, calling Mr. Barr a tyrant, a maniac, and by abusing the barbarous Americans in general; she mingled her indignation with anticipations of seeing dear France, and conjectures as to whether Pierrot Foyer's head had yet recovered from the rap she gave it with her sabot.

Petronille and her bonne were hurried off in the first steamer that sailed. Ralph had said his farewell on the pier. He had said, "Wait;" Petronille had whispered, "Hope."

Ralph Barr was acting as tutor to four boys of different ages. The parents of these young hopefuls conceived that Dresden would be an excellent place in which to send their boys to school. Ralph was accordingly engaged to take charge of the youngsters, and to see that they arrived safely in the chosen city. Although it would be the means of depriving him of his tutorship, Ralph was glad of this voyage, for it took an ocean from the distance that divided him from Petronille.

One day Miss Lemmins, mistress of the English boarding-school at Nantes, received a missive which considerably astonished that sedate lady. It was from Mr. Raymond Barr. Here is an extract—

"I am not married, Miss Lemmins, and consequently I live at a hotel. The fuss of a wedding at such a place would be very embarrassing besides, I hate fuss of any sort. It doesn't agree with my nerves; therefore, my dear madam, I would be eternally grateful, if you would allow my ward to be married from your academy.

"My nephew, Mr. Richard Barr, is the man I have selected to be my dear Petronille's husband."

"How affectionately he writes," thought Miss Lemmins, for judging from Marie's description of him, she had concluded that he was a civilized fiend—Mephistopheles tempered by Lord Chesterfield.

"I am sure," continued the letter, "that my ward, having profited by your excellent example and instruction, (the fame of which has reached even to this distant shore,) will have too just a sense of her duty to object to any husband which I, her guardian, may provide."

"Well I never!" commented Miss Lemmins, much flattered. "I can scarcely realize that my humble labors should be so highly appreciated. If Petronille does not promptly obey her delightful guardian, I shall deem her very reprehensible—very reprehensible indeed!"

"Richard Barr," resumed the guardian, "will reach Nantes in about one month from the date of this letter. There is but little time, but I hope you will be able to prepare the trousseau before his arrival, as I desire that the marriage shall take place as soon after Richard's arrival as possible. You will of course find a reasonable sum deposited to your order at Celon's banking-house."

Miss Lemmins wrote an assenting answer to Mr. Barr's letter, and began the preparations by teaching a choir of pupils to sing the wedding chorus from Der Freischütz, arranged and improved by herself.

When Petronille was informed of the contents of her guardian's letter, she started in a frightened way, but then immediately resumed her place, saying wearily—

"It is the custom. When one's guardian chooses a husband, one must marry him, I suppose."

"Of course," assented Miss Lemmins, who had become quite a Frenchwoman in her notions.

Days passed. Like Bluebeard's wife in the old fairy tale, Petronille hoped daily that a knight might come over at the eleventh hour to rescue her from her impending fate, and Marie acted Sister Anne's part to the life by dissipating her young mistress's hopes as fast as they arose.

Richard Barr had eagerly accepted his uncle's proposal that he should start for France, in order to marry a fairly endowed heiress. He had arranged everything for his departure, and secured his passage the very day on which his uncle disclosed the little plan regarding Petronille. He had satisfactorily settled the Cuban business, and he was anxious for his reward. He saw no difficulty in the way. Armed with a letter of introduction from his uncle, he expected to go, see and conquer.

Richard Barr had made some questionable acquaintances, for, as I have said, he was given to dissipation in a cheap way. Among these acquaintances was a certain Barney O'Ryan, a dealer in spirituous liquors. This gentleman took an affectionate leave of Richard Barr. He gave Richard several of his business cards, saying—"An' sure, Mr. Barr, I hope you'll not forget the taste of the rael, ould stuff wid drinkin' them wake French wines. Sure a hogshead of 'em wouldn't make a man drunk!" And Mr. O'Ryan sighed, and congratulated himself on his own superior advantages. "If you look at the back o' me card there, you'll find me lowest prices, Mr. Barr. Bong vi'age, me dear fellow!"

Richard Barr took the cards and placed them in his pocket-book. In a few moments the steamer was puffing toward the sea.

He reached Nantes about the time mentioned in his uncle's letter to Miss Lemmins, and narrowly escaped meeting his Cousin Ralph, who was stopping at the same hotel. They would have certainly met at the table d'hôte had not Richard during his stay always dined at a remarkably cheap restaurant, which he had luckily discovered.

Ralph Barr having chaperoned his pupils safely to Dresden, had entered France. He travelled on foot as much as possible, and thus saved money. Day by day he moved nearer to Brittany. He told himself a hundred falsehoods—he pretended that his object was to perfect himself in the French language—to see the quaint Breton costumes—when the plain truth was that he wanted only to see Petronille once more.

Richard Barr got himself up regardless of expense one day. The colors of the rainbow revelled gorgeously in his cravat. A marvellous imitation opal and pearl ring cinctured one of the thick canary-colored fingers of his glove. His coat was perfect in fit, and he shook odors aromatic from his very greasy locks. He intended to visit his bride elect.

With an air of confidence he carelessly gave his card to Miss Lemmins's neat little maid and took his seat in the parlor, conscious that several young lady pupils were giggling their admiration in convenient hiding-places.

The neat little maid took the card up to her mistress. Miss Lemmins took the pasteboard and read—

"Barney O'Ryan,
Dealer in foreign and domestic liquors.
Best brandy always on hand."

"Where is this man?" demanded Miss Lemmins in a tone that made the little maid's green eyes look like extremely ripe gooseberries.

"In the parlor, ma'am."

Miss Lemmins turned the card. There were some words traced in pencil, "Being an old customer, I'll let you have ten quarts of my scalding-hot whisky at—"

Miss Lemmins was speechless. "I an old customer! Ten quarts of whisky!" she burst forth at last. "This to me—a member of a total-abstinence society—the shameless wretch!"

With garments rustling wrathfully, Miss Lemmins descended to the parlor. The unconscious Richard rose to greet her.

"Leave this house instantly, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Lemmins. "How dare you insult me—how dare you pollute this temple of education with your presence? Begone!"

"I beg pardon, madam," stammered Richard, picking up his hat. "I am somewhat surprised—"

"Surprised!" cried Miss Lemmins, growing hotter in her wrath. "And did you expect to meet any other welcome in *this* house? Go instantly!"

"What do you mean, madam? Have you seen my card?"

"I have, sir. I wonder at the audacity that you evinced in presenting it to me—*to me*, whose principles are so well known—"

"I assure you, madam, that I didn't know you had any principles—I really—"

But the expression of Miss Lemmins's face warned him that discretion would be the better part of valor, so he made a precipitate retreat in a very perplexed state of mind, never guessing that he had given that respected preceptress the wrong card.

On the day after Richard's discomfiture, Ralph called at Miss Lemmins's. That learned lady was engaged in directing the wedding chorus at the time, but she came down and received him very graciously when he introduced himself as a nephew of Mr. Raymond Barr's.

"Everything is ready, only the girls need a little more practice, you know." And Miss Lemmins smiled archly. "I think I can name to-morrow two weeks hence, as her guardian desired it to be as soon as possible. I'll go and tell her that you are here."

And Miss Lemmins left the room, leaving Ralph helplessly endeavoring to solve the enigma of her speech.

Petronille came in, looking wan and tearful. Her face flushed and brightened as she saw Ralph.

"Oh, I'm so glad! I thought it was your cousin."

"This is the gentleman you are going to marry, Petronille," said Miss Lemmins, bustling in with an air of importance.

"Are you quite certain?" began Petronille, anxiously.

"Certain!" repeated Miss Lemmins, in an irritated tone. "If I hadn't looked your guardian's letter up in my room, I'd show it to you, if you doubt my word."

Ralph stood in silent astonishment during the dialogue. After awhile he began to understand that Mr. Raymond Barr had written a letter commanding Petronille to marry him. He was puzzled, but every other feeling soon gave way to joy, which Petronille shared, and did not attempt to conceal.

"I was just saying," said Miss Lemmins, "that the girls are not quite perfect in the wedding chorus, but that we might say to-morrow week—"

"To-morrow!" broke in Ralph, who feared that some unforeseen accident might arise to dash the cup of happiness from his lips.

After a great deal of entreaty and persuasion, Miss Lemmins agreed to this, and admitted that the chorus might do, although she had her fears.

Petronille repented of the harsh thoughts she had cherished when Miss Lemmins had received her guardian's letter. What a dear, kind man her guardian was!

Before the sun set a second time after Ralph's visit, Petronille had become his wife.

To paint Miss Lemmins's horror when another letter from Mr. Raymond Barr revealed her mistake, would be simply impossible. The thought, however, that the wedding, and especially her Der Freischütz chorus, had gone off successfully, was soothing balm to her lacerated feelings.

Mr. Raymond Barr lost his appetite for a week after the news of Ralph's marriage reached him. To this day Richard Barr does not know the cause of Miss Lemmins's anger. He probably thinks that his dazzling "get-up" produced that effect on her which the color red produces on certain animals.

☞ It is the unguarded word which oftenest proves a root of bitterness in married life—the want of a proper discipline of speech which thrusts thorns and needles into family happiness. Young married people cannot be too careful in the exercise of a wholesome restraint over their tongues and intercourse with each other, if they would preserve mutual respect and lay a solid basis for domestic tranquility.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

☞ Church property in the United States is estimated to be worth $350,000,000.

☞ Buffalo has a blacksmith named Shakspere.

☞ Illinois reports 83 deaths from threshing-machine accidents this season.

☞ It is suggested that many wives do not appreciate the difference between housekeeping and housekeeping.

☞ A Circuit Court in Illinois recently awarded $100 damages to a young lady who was forcibly expelled from a high school for refusing to study one of the prescribed branches.

☞ Twin babies were born in Portland, Maine, recently, joined together like the Siamese twins. Both died in a short time.

☞ The Cardiff giant is said to have been sold recently in New Orleans for the small sum of $8.

☞ Cleveland, Ohio, has started a ladies' club. Babies and husbands are not admitted.

☞ At Portland, Maine, recently, as a blacksmith was paring a horse's hoof, preparatory to shoeing him, he found a cent imbedded in the hoof and covered by the frog.

☞ It has been said that it is better for a woman to be laughed at for not being married, than to be unable to laugh because she is married.

☞ The first brick house in Detroit was erected in 1807 by Benjamin Woodworth, brother of the author of the poem the "Old Oaken Bucket," who still resides in that city.

☞ Miss Perry, Schuylkill county, Pa., tried to kill herself with a knife because her lover had grown cold in his affections and had resolved to marry another.

☞ An Augusta, Ga., farmer recently discovered that a dog belonging to a neighbor was in the habit of milking one of his cows for his own benefit. The cow did not seem to object.

☞ A couple at Glidden, Iowa, lately married themselves in the presence of church and congregation, simply announcing their intentions and kissing each other.

☞ A girl in Vienna, Indiana, lately swallowed a wasp, which stung her in the throat, and she died from suffocation on account of the swelling.

☞ A Lehigh county physician claims to have been present at the birth of 7000 citizens in that county.

☞ Mormon husbands in Utah are said to be cutting down expenses, by reducing the number of their wives.

☞ A teacher at Cairo, Ill., lately thrashed a small boy nearly to death because he wouldn't multiply 63 by 7.

☞ A Massachusetts gentleman, recently deceased, provided in his will that the horse he rode during the war should be taken great care of during the remainder of its life, and when dead should be stuffed and placed in a glass case.

☞ A Nevada paper recently contained the following brief local: "Too many friends of Bill Thomson will regret to hear that he was hashed up by a catamount the other day on Nixon's Hill, while lying in wait to shoot a Chinaman."

☞ Santiago, Chili, has been holding a successful "Exposition," which included, among other attractions, a Cannibal Indian of Terra del Fuego, called Jose, who was captured about two months ago by the Governor of the Magellan Colony on board of a schooner, whose captain, mate and three sailors were eaten by the said Fuegian and two others.

☞ George Woodley, an errand boy, sixteen years of age, committed suicide at Brighton whilst in a state of depression caused by the fear that a promised rise of wages would be withheld from him in consequence of his having overslept himself.

☞ Some letters were recently received from Europe, at the New York post-office, bearing very remarkable addresses. One was directed to "Care of Town Hall, Broadway, Massachusetts, State of New York," another to "Montevideo, Florida, South America, United States, N. Y.," and a third to "Luigi Savana, negociant, America, Washington street, New Jersey, Illinois."

☞ "How old is your mother?" asked a love-smitten old bachelor of the daughter of the widow who had enchanted him. "I don't know, sir; ma's age varies from about forty-three to twenty-five," was the artless reply, and the bachelor was disenchanted.

☞ A Nursery Scene.—"Now, Willie, do have a little courage. When I have a powder to take I don't like it any more than you do; but I make up my mind that I will take it, and I do." "And when I have a powder to take," replied Willie, "I make up my mind that I won't take it, and I don't."

☞ A youthful correspondent wants to know what magazine would give him the highest position the quickest. A powder magazine would hurry him a few.

☞ Nothing really succeeds which is not based on reality; sham, in a large sense, is never successful; in the life of the individual, as in the more comprehensive life of the State, pretension is nothing and power is everything.—*Whipple*.

☞ "How do you get along?" said a wife to her husband, in the midst of the panic. "Oh, I shall weather the storm, but I wish I had only a few hundred dollars more." "Don't you wish you had married a rich wife?" said she, in a teasing way; then, going to her room, she returned with rather more than the amount required in United States bonds. "Why, where in the world did you get this?" said the husband. "Well, my dear, you went to a champagne supper seven years ago, and on your return, finding navigation around the room rather difficult, deposited hat, shoes, gloves, and a huge roll of bank bills on the carpet. I put the money away and waited three weeks for you to inquire if I had seen it, when, finding you were ashamed to do so, I invested it, and here you have it."

☞ Distinguishing Marks of Ocean Steamers.—The Journal of Commerce, in reply to a correspondent, gives a list of the distinguishing marks of the different lines of ocean steamers by the varied styles in which the smoke-stacks of their vessels are painted. Of the New York and Liverpool lines, there are the National line, with the smoke-stacks painted white, with a black band at the top; the Cunard line, red, with black band at top; White Star line, yellow, with black top; Inman line, black, with white ribbon near top; Guion line, black, with red ribbon near the top; the French line, New York to Brest and Havre, has its smoke-stacks red with a black band at the top; Hamburg line, New York to Hamburg, all black; North German, Lloyd's line, New York to Bremen, all black; Anchor line, New York to Glasgow, all black; Cardiff line, New York to Cardiff, black, with two white stripes around the top; Stettin-American line, New York to Stettin, white, with narrow black top; Bristol line, New York to Bristol, black, with red band in centre, and blue and white ball in band; Eagle line, New York to Hamburg, black top, white centre, lower part red.

California Sheep Dogs.

A traveller in Southern California gives the following account of the famous sheep dogs used there, and of the manner in which they are trained. He writes: "You may go over the plains and hills there for miles and see thousands of sheep, but not a man to watch them. Around each flock or band of say a thousand sheep are half a dozen dogs of a peculiar breed—dogs whose progenitors were imported from the sheep pastures of the old world. These dogs take the entire care of the sheep, drive them out to pasture in the morning, keep them from straying during the day, and bring them home at night. These dogs have inherited a talent for keeping sheep, but the shepherds do not depend wholly on that. They cultivate it in this way—so at least the old shepherd says:—When a lamb is born it is taken away from the mother sheep before she has seen it, and a puppy put in its place. The sheep suckles the puppy and learns to love it. When the puppy grows old enough to eat meat it is fed in the morning and sent out with the sheep. It stays with them because it is accustomed to be with its mother, but it cannot feed with them. As they get full the dog gets hungry. At length, impatient to return where it hopes to get another piece of meat, it begins to tease and worry its mother, and finally starts her toward home; the other sheep follow, and thus the whole flock is brought in. If the dog brings the sheep home too soon, or comes home without them, he gets no supper, or is punished in some way. Hence he soon learns when to come, and to see to it that none of his charge are left behind."

☞ There are certain things which would probably never be done if men were not confined in prison for life, and it would not matter much if they never were done. One of this kind is the achievement of a convict at Charlestown, Mass., who has relieved the tedium of his lonely hours by carving from wood with a pocket-knife a representation of steamboats, rowboats, horses, men, &c., in all attitudes. Among other things is a circus with a full audience. The whole thing contains 2175 images, of which 112 are horses.

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LITTLE LIZZIE.

When the day is softly closing,
And the sun is in the west—
When, as if with brightness wearied,
Birds and blossoms sink to rest—
Then I have the sweetest pleasure
That can crown a day of care,
When with folded hands my darling
Kneels to say her evening prayer.

Oh, it is so sweet to see her,
With her little serious face,
And her earnest eyes uplifted
With such reverential grace;
Like a crown of light celestial
Shines her falling golden hair—
Surely angels bend to listen
To my darling's evening prayer.

"Our Father," so she murmurs;
And the thought is so divine,
That it calms a troubled spirit;
"Our Father," here and mine—
She so young, so fair and spotless,
Human, yet so free from sin;
I so far away from Heaven,
She so fit to enter in.

Little Lizzie, pure and gentle,
Keep thy hallowed evening prayers;
Life may some day press upon thee,
With its crosses and its cares;
Then, though all the joys should leave thee
To which human hearts will cling,
Thou shalt find a certain shelter
Underneath "Our Father's" wing.

SUSANNA J.

MRS. HOUGHTON'S PORTRAITS.

BY ANNIE H. JEROME.

"Yes, miss, things is handsome here, and I'm glad you happened down the old corridor, seeing as how this part of the house is not used once in a year, and so not much seen. And then, miss, things ain't only handsome, but fixed so; and it's certain that only a first-class housekeeper like Mrs. Dell is, could a-done it so tidy and tasty. Besides that, Mrs. Dell she thinks of everything, as that picture over there proves sure enough. Now, I'd dare swear, miss, that nobody but Mrs. Dell would a-thought to put it in this out-of-the-way old room, and kiver it all up with that pretty cloud of pink crape and knotted ribbon."

Miss Keith glanced smilingly at the indicated niche, asking, as Patty's tongue subsided:

"But why did Mrs. Dell cover it, Patty? What is it? Is it pretty?"

Patty dropped brush and duster.

"Pretty!" she repeated, for the instant more amazed than polite. "Pretty! Bless your heart, Miss Keith! why it's Mrs. Houghton's living self, they say. And pretty! Oh! if you could just see it once! She is standing this way"—and the plump little housemaid struck an attitude, which came near annihilating Miss Keith's gravity—"her big black eyes burning down upon you with such a loving look, and yet so scornful like. She looks just as if she was mocking you with love, Mrs. Dell says, and you can't for the life of you tell whether she's of Heaven or hell."

"But," objected Miss Keith, "Mrs. Houghton has not big, black eyes, Patty, and we all know she's very near Heaven; besides—"

"La! miss, I don't mean Mr. Houghton's mother, bless her! I thought you knowed as how I meant Mr. Houghton's wife—Mrs. Harris Houghton," interrupted Patty, in her astonishment.

"Mr. Houghton's wife!" echoed Miss Keith, unbounded amazement in every tone.

"Why, la! miss, don't you know about Mr. Houghton's wife?" asked the maid, in equal amazement. "I thought the whole world knowed about her; for it has talked enough, dear knows, though, to be sure, nobody speaks of her here except under the breath."

Miss Keith bent suddenly over her boot-lace. But it was a needless artifice; Patty had no eyes for the paling cheek thus crimsoned.

"Indeed, then, miss, it's no wonder," she eagerly continued. "Even Mrs. Dell don't like to speak of them days, they were so much worse than sorrowful with Mrs. Houghton's cranks, and tempers and tantrums, and the dear Lord only knows what besides. Then when she went away—"

"Went away!" Miss Keith echoed, unwittingly thinking aloud; for she had no disposition to question a servant about this grief of Harris Houghton's life.

"Yes, miss, go she would, and go she did—and that was six years ago—to a brother, who lives in Germany. Mr. Houghton tried hard to keep her, though I guess more from duty than love; for the love must a-burnt itself out pretty soon, I take it, and she said boldly she hated him. Yet they say no words could tell how he loved her at first. And he was always kind—even down to the day they parted. But I've often heered there's a bit of sunshine for the onhappiest, and Mr. Houghton surely got his when—"

Mrs. Dell's voice in the hall brought Patty's story to a sudden close, and Miss Keith gladly took advantage of the interruption, and made her escape to her own room.

Locking the door behind her, she sunk into the low window-seat. Then the year of her life at Houghton Court flashed, panorama-like, before her mental vision.

"I thought he loved me," she murmured, chokingly, "but I see now that I am only a charming woman to him. So banish the sweet dream, Margaret Keith, and take up the old rusty life as if the dream had never been. God has work for the saddest and loneliest; go and do it as in God's sight."

And leaving her seat she brushed her somewhat disordered hair, and went downstairs.

"I am a few minutes behind time, Mr. Houghton. I hope you will pardon me, in consideration of my usual punctuality," she apologized, as she entered the library in which that gentleman sat.

"I will pardon you anything and everything;" he smiled without lifting his eyes from the half-filled sheet which engaged him. "But you will find enough to keep you busy now you are here."

She did not reply; but took her seat at the little writing-table which had been assigned to her when she first entered upon her duties as old Mrs. Houghton's companion, and Harris Houghton's occasional amanuensis. For a long time she wrote diligently; but at last her head dropped on her hand, and she fell into a revery so profound that Harris Houghton's movements were unnoted till he withdrew the listlessly-held pen from her fingers.

"I am ashamed of myself," she hastily said, again possessing herself of it.

"You have no cause to be," returned Mr. Houghton. "The weariness marked on every line of your face is sufficient excuse. Leave these letters till afternoon or to-morrow, and go and rest." Margaret shook her head obstinately. "I am quite able to attend to them now, I assure you." And she dipped her pen into the ink.

"Can't I tempt you with an hour's drive, then?" he urged. "You will be home again before my mother requires your services. What do you say?"

"Thank you from my heart; but I prefer not," she smiled, resolved to deny herself so dangerous a pleasure.

Finding persuasions useless he went back to his work. But when at the end of an hour she left the room, he started up and strode to the window.

"I wonder what troubles her?" he thought, anxiously, "for there certainly is trouble hidden in the depths of those great brown eyes. I will end all this: she shall hear the story this afternoon!"

But events proved unfavorable. Sweet old Mrs. Houghton was suffering from a severe headache, and it was late twilight when Margaret consented to leave the sick room for the piazza. Here Mr. Houghton found her at last. He had caught up her red riding-hood on his way through the hall, and without a word proceeded to adjust it about her head and shoulders. And as he stood there knotting the ribbons under her chin with a lingering touch of his magnetic fingers, she could have sobbed outright for the dreary, loveless future.

"The moon is just rising; will you walk with me awhile?" he asked, breaking the sweet silence.

And without pausing for reply he drew her hand within his arm and led her down among the blossoming vases, tinkling fountains, and deep shadows of the old larches. Long they walked there, silent and thoughtful. At length Harris Houghton spoke, his voice low and husky.

"Miss Keith, you know of my past?—of its shadow I mean."

Something in the sweet gravity of Margaret's quiet "yes" prompted him to even greater abruptness. Taking one of the dainty hands nervously twisting the long ribbons he had knotted awhile before, he spoke:

"Margaret, will you turn Sibyl for me to-night, and tell me my future?" he asked with passionate eagerness. "I will not cross this slender palm with silver, dear, but with the pure gold of my love. Will you tell me my fortune then, dear? Will you tell it for love?"

His voice was so low and sweet as he stood bending over her there under the old larches, and she loved him so! One irrepressible thrill of joy tided its way from soul to body. The next instant she withdrew her hand and replied with cold emphasis:

"You mistake me; I am no Sibyl, Mr. Houghton. We will return if you please."

He made no response, but with a face deathly white under the pale moonlight turned at her bidding toward the house. They had proceeded a short distance when, with one of the passionate impulses natural to her she stopped.

"We shall never approach this subject again," she said in low, vehement tones, "and you shall know the truth. Will I tell your fortune for love? Do I love you? The meanest weed on which your shadow falls is fairer to me than the whitest of white lilies! The little blade of grass crushed by your foot I could cherish forever. Ah, better than that! I could sacrifice my own selfish hopes and joys for your sake. I could willingly denude myself of your love that you might thus be made happier and better. And more, still more! For this I could even pray and strive to unlove you. Do I love you, Harris Houghton?" Then suddenly flinging aside the caressing hands which had imprisoned hers, she added with burning passion: "Yet think not that I fail to realize the shame and misery of loving you—think not that your love is aught but a pain and burden to me!"

"The shame and misery of loving me! My love a pain and burden to you! Do you mean it, Margaret?"

Choking emotions kept her silent for a minute, and he repeated in the same shocked voice, "Margaret?"

Then she answered quietly—

"How could it be otherwise? I mean it!"

"It is enough!" he said, bitterly. "If my life's sorrow is a shame in your eyes, it's shadow shall never touch you, rest assured."

Surprised at his reply, a low ejaculation escaped her, and she was about to exclaim, "I did not mean that," when, seized by a new impulse, she hastily caught his hand to her lips, and the next moment was gone.

"Pride is stronger than love with her, it seems," he muttered, bitterly, "though I would have staked my life upon her self-forgetful devotion. The world has pointed its finger at Harris Houghton's broken home, and that is more than Margaret Keith can brook. Be it so! And from this hour I forswear woman's love!"

And while Margaret Keith resolved in wild despair to leave Houghton Court forever, he rapidly matured a plan for their speedy and effectual separation. The first step toward it was taken the next morning.

"There will be no library duties for you to-day, Miss Keith," he said briefly, though pleasantly, as he left the breakfast room. And from that time the usual morning tête-à-tête was broken up. In a day or two this step was followed by another. It was late in the afternoon of the day in question when he hastily entered the drawing-room where his mother and Margaret were seated together.

"I have come to ask what you think of it, mother," he said, abruptly, and with a forced laugh.

"Think of what?" she said, turning quickly and looking anxiously up in his face as he leaned over the back of her chair.

"Of giving me a vacation."

"My fears told me it was that," she sighed, turning away. "Another prolonged stay on the Continent, I suppose?"

"If you can spare me."

"For how long, Harris?" she asked, more cheerfully.

"I cannot say." And he went on to map out his plans, while Margaret sat in pained silence, though so outwardly calm as to defy the keen scrutiny with which he had regarded her throughout the conversation.

At last it was over, and he returned to the library. He had not been there long when a timid rap was followed by the entrance of Margaret. A hot flush burned on her cheek as she caught his look of surprise.

"Thank you; no," she said, declining the proffered chair. "I shall remain but a minute. I have come, hoping to induce you to reconsider your resolve."

"Ah!" he exclaimed with eager emotion. "You—"

"Pardon me," she interrupted, lifting a hand in grieved deprecation, "I am only here to say—" She paused, and then cried in passionate entreaty, "Don't let me drive you from your home! Stay! I shall leave Houghton Court as soon as some one can be provided to take my place. Had your mother been as well as usual, I would have spoken to her immediately after our—and—and to-day you anticipated my own communication by a very few minutes." She concluded in faltering confusion. Then she added, hastily: "If you will decide to make your absence a short one, you will find me gone when you return. I shall hope, however, to get off before the day appointed for your own departure."

There was a short, agitated silence, and then he spoke, pain and passion in every tone—

"If you were a thousand miles hence I should go, Miss Keith. Houghton Court has been the scene of griefs which I can never forget, and but for my mother's

CANDID!

Simultaneously. "HOST (*smacking his lips*)—"Now, what do you say to that glass of champagne?" GUEST—"My dear fellow, where did you get this abominable Jersey cider?"

fondness for the old place I would sell it, or," he added bitterly, "that being impossible, raze it to the ground!" After an instant's pause he said, more quietly: "I must away or go mad, Miss Keith. If, then, you are willing to do me a kindness, remain with my mother. She loves you only less than she does her idolized son, and I know you will give her all a daughter's care, if not affection. Can you grant me this, the only favor I shall ever ask of you? Will you remain?"

His breast heaved under his crossed arms as he awaited her somewhat tardy reply. It came at last, so low as to be almost unintelligible.

"Heaven helping me, I will indeed fill a daughter's place."

And without trusting herself with a glance at his pale face, she abruptly left the room.

She remained at Houghton Court, and measured the height and depth of the sacrifice she had made in so doing. Houghton Court lost its old charm in the absence of its owner, and under the sting of the bitter sweet memories clustering about it. But love and duty chained her; and the weeks rolled into months, till the months counted a year and more. It was now mid-autumn.

'Twas on a certain bright morning in this mid-autumn that Margaret, bending intently over the work-basket in her lap, at length attracted Mrs. Houghton's attention.

"For what are you searching among that tangled mass of worsted, Margaret?" she asked.

"Just for one little strand the color of this," pointing to the desired shade on the piece of embroidery before her; "and I find I shall have to send, or ride, three miles to get it."

"Wait a minute, child," Mrs. Houghton called, as Margaret reached the door. "I am almost sure I have a bundle of worsted up-stairs." And she gave a few minute directions about a certain deep drawer in a certain old bureau. "You will find that drawer something of a curiosity-shop," she concluded. "For the last eight years I have been sending Janet to it with troublesome odds and ends which might some day prove useful."

And such Margaret decided it indeed was, as she rapidly tossed over its motley contents. Bits of unfinished embroidery and rolls of worsted were carelessly heaped together with rich silks, rare old laces, pencil sketches, and sealed packages of letters. The sketches were fine, and she turned them over with eager interest. As she did so, her attention was chained by a crayon head, the strange beauty of which made her quite forgetful of the passing minutes. At last she aroused herself, and springing to her feet, gathered up the worsted and hurried down-stairs.

"Mrs. Houghton, I have found the worsted, and something else," she eagerly exclaimed, as she entered the room. "A masterly sketch of the most unbeautiful beautiful face art ever conceived. Or has it an original?"

And she knelt beside Mrs. Houghton, who wiped her spectacles, remarking, sorrowfully—

"I have never known but one to whom that description could apply—and the only portrait the house contains of her is out of sight. And it would not contain that, could I summon enough courage to broach the subject to Mrs. Dell."

Margaret knew that Mrs. Houghton alluded to the covered portrait in the north room, and a sudden fear struck her as the picture was taken. Mrs. Houghton, adjusting her spectacles more carefully, at first only discerned a blurred outline. The next instant the bewitching face was lost forever amid dames into which it was impetuously flung.

"Oh, forgive me!" Margaret regretfully cried, as tears filled the dim eyes and rolled over the withered cheek. "I did not know—did not even suspect."

"How should you, child? Oh, Margaret, that young creature was like an evil spirit in this house, with her fascinations, caprices, tyrannic will and ungoverned temper. She was forever alluring; forever deluding. If you could have seen her, as I have, sitting here on a low cushion at my feet, her great eyes lifted in simulated fondness to my face, you would never marvel at my poor Harris's infatuation.

"To win love and then cast it scornfully aside, seemed the chief pleasure of her life. The very dogs in their kennels had to yield to her charm and give place to her moods. But on poor Harris all this fell the worst—and yet the best. You know Harris—he is so good! Don't you think so, dear?"

And Mrs. Houghton's eyes lost their pained expression as she waited for Margaret's reply.

"The very best of the good, dear Mrs. Houghton," Margaret replied, a little chokingly.

With that charming naivete peculiar to a sweet old age, Mrs. Houghton said, softly—

"I think so!" resuming, after a little, "Harris was always good, dear, but the trouble made him better; and therefore I say it fell on him for the best. When he married Lina Eshton he was impatient of all things that crossed his will. When she left his protection for that of her brother, he was the gentle, self-controlled man you know him to be.

"But it was fearful at first, Margaret—the terrible disappointment and grief he would not completely unveil even before my loving eyes. I remember he once said to me—'I have an abiding faith in the things that *are*, mother. Such are good for me. When I want calm there is storm; when I want sunshine, there are clouds. But I have learned that patience is conceived, born, and nurtured in the midst of trial. So I accept the things that are, mother, placing my trust in One. Were it not so, I should be a miserable creature!'

"Even I, his mother, prized this slight unveiling of the heart so scrupulously hidden from human eyes."

Margaret crushed her teeth into the red lips, which might else have quivered, and ventured no reply. The silence passed unobserved by Mrs. Houghton, whose thoughts were busy with the past and present of her son.

"But, Margaret," she directly resumed, "the woman who wins his love will never have cause to complain of his reticence. His heart will always be an open book to her."

Margaret making no reply, Mrs. Houghton continued:

"I wish he would marry again! I do wish it," she sighed, plaintively; "he needs more than mother love, and might yet be supremely happy."

Margaret started, exclaiming, in faltering accents:

"But his wife!—I mean Mrs. Houghton—still lives, and—or was there a divorce?"

"Don't you know, child?" whispered Mrs. Houghton reverently, and then continued, in answer to the troubled query in Margaret's eyes: "She died—let me see—the December—no, the January you came to Houghton Court."

Mrs. Houghton, occupied with her dates, was unobservant of Margaret's agitation, and added, gravely and sadly:

"We could not be sorry, Margaret, at least not for ourselves; and, indeed, we should not have been for her, since in all things God's time is the best time for good and bad."

In the brief silence that followed, Margaret recalled those last words of Harris Houghton as they stood together under the old larches, comprehending, with bitter regret, their real import, and the bitter pain she had inflicted.

"I will write and justify myself," she thought, the hot blood leaping redly to her cheeks. The second thought that he might have outlived his love for her had barely changed her resolution, when Mrs. Houghton again spoke.

"Why Lina accepted Harris will always remain a mystery to me; for he was never a handsome man, and her own means were too abundant to admit of a suspicion in that direction. That she ever loved him is incredible; that she soon hated him is beyond question; and that with a Satanic hatred fearful to behold. Such hatred was the natural result of the firm yet wise rule he exercised over her wayward will. Poor Harris!"

Margaret, with a pitiful glance at the past weary months, asked, sadly:

"Why have you never alluded to this subject before? You give me so much confidence."

"I could not open the old wound, child, and supposed, of course, that you knew what the world knows only too well."

"I understand," Margaret softly returned, stroking the thin, wrinkled hand; "and now let us close it forever."

But that afternoon Mrs. Houghton resumed the subject.

In one of her diary-like letters to her son she gave, as the noteworthy event of the day, a full account of what had passed, inclusive of Margaret's erroneous idea. In due time the reply came, Mrs. Houghton anxiously remarking, as she broke the seal:

"I am afraid he is sick, Margaret. It is a very light letter.' But the next moment a cry of joy escaped her lips. "He is coming home, Margaret! He is coming home at last!" she cried. "This is what he says: 'I will answer your letter in person—shall be with you on the twentieth.'"

But it wanted two days of the twentieth when Margaret, standing alone in the evening before the drawing-room fire, was startled by the sound of a well-known footstep in the hall. The next instant Harris Houghton entered, and stood beside her. Surprise, embarrassment and pleasure were all depicted on her countenance, as she stood rooted to the spot, and she only found voice when he bent smilingly over her, and caught her hand with an earnest "How are you?"

"You have taken us by surprise," she answered, with a deep breath.

"How are you?" he repeated, the smile deepening in his fine eyes as he still bent over her.

"Very glad to see you," she replied.

The saucy wilfulness of her answer called a little laugh to his lips, but he again asked, with unvarying precision:

"How are you?"

"Since you will have a direct answer—I am well, thank you," she laughed; "quite well. But how is it that you are so much in advance of the time you fixed? I was thinking of you at the very moment I heard your footstep, and—"

"So you do think of me sometimes," he interrupted, impetuously.

"Think of you! Yes!"

The sudden uplifting of the eyes sorrowfully expressive of the story of her deathless love; the passionate emphasis of the words slipping from her lips without conscious thought, made an eloquent reply, and one which shocked her instantly. With a hasty movement toward the door she said confusedly:

"Your mother—I will tell her of your arrival. She has not yet retired, I think, though she went to her room soon after tea."

"Not yet, Margaret," he said, quietly, and drew her gently back to her station before the fire. "Not till you answer one question which I must ask." Then with a sudden passionate appeal in his deep voice he stretched both hands toward her exclaiming: "Will you come now, Margaret? Will you come?"

And that night Mrs. Houghton received to her heart a son and a daughter.

HONEY.

BY DAISY BURNS.

He was dark, with all his beauty in his eyes; a pair of brown eyes which danced and sparkled sometimes, or looked sad or even stern at others. Then again such a world of love could creep out from the brown orbs. He was a merchant. She was rather fair, with all her beauty in her good heart. She was the daughter of Mr. Horton, a lawyer of Huntsville, who doted on his daughter, and she was her mother's darling.

His name was Laurence Sanford, commonly known as Laurie. Her name was Lena Horton, but from some cause or other, perhaps because it was a nickname in childhood, she was called Honey, and by no name but Honey Horton was she known. Honey abhorred the soubriquet save when uttered by Laurie; for it seemed perfect sweetness when coming from his lips. She had known Laurie a long while, and loved him very dearly, yes, more than she had ever loved any one; and did he love her? Perhaps; any way she thought so. Though she knew he visited Avice Raynard sometimes, she trusted him. She knew she received attention from other young men, and she only loved Laurie; then could not Laurie visit other girls and love only her? She knew Avice was much prettier than herself: she knew Avice had great black eyes while hers were only gray; a pale, ugly gray, and Laurie admired black eyes. Then Avice sang so beautifully; she could not sing like Avice, and Laurie loved music. No wonder Laurie visited her often. At one time Honey became a little uneasy, but when she broached the subject to Laurie, he soon dispelled all her fears by saying he loved her best of all, and with a kiss or a gentle hand-pressure he left her, still believing, trusting, loving him. Love is very short-sighted any way, and if Laurie had faults Honey could not see them. He loved her, she said, and that was all she cared for. But Honey's love was kept to herself. Unlike most of her sex she had no confidants, and her friends only knew she bore a strong friendship for Laurie. Laurie knew she loved him, Honey knew it, God knew it, and that was all. One day Honey had a visitor, a cousin of Avice's.

"I wonder," said this cousin, during her visit, "how long it will be before Avice's wedding?"

"Avice's wedding!" said Honey. "Is she going to marry?"

"Why, yes—I thought everybody knew she was engaged."

"To whom?"

"Laurie Sanford; they've been engaged a long time."

"I—I—didn't know it."

"It's true without a doubt—but I can't see for what they are waiting."

Here the conversation changed; and after her visitor left, Honey leaned her head on the table and shed a few tears: and when her mother entered, and asked "what was the matter," she had such a headache. Honey was a very sensible girl generally, and she reasoned thus—

"I'm sure I don't want to love Laurie, if he doesn't love me. He tells me he does—yet they say he is going to marry Avice. Oh, I can't—I won't believe it. He is the soul of truth. He would not deceive me, my Laurie wouldn't. How could he look so lovingly at me, or press my hand when we meet? Yes, surely he loves me."

Then Laurie came to see her. And as he left, she told him what had been told her.

"Laurie, what does it mean? If you are trifling with me, it is cruel of you."

"Why, Honey, my dear Honey, you must not believe everything you hear. I like Avice—I like all the girls; but I like you best of all. Don't you know a fellow can't visit a young lady twice, unless they have it they are going to marry. Why I heard the other day, you and Charlie Weston were going to be married; yet I'm not at all jealous. Here, Honey, kiss me good-bye, and don't be so distrustful. Surely you have known me long enough to trust me."

And Honey murmurs as he leaves her—"He is true; and I *will* love him. But, oh, what would I do should he prove false!" Ah, Honey, wait and see.

A year passed, and there was a wedding in the little church of Huntsville. Laurie Sanford was the bridegroom. Honey was there, but she was not the bride—and Avice Raynard was. Honey did not want to witness it, but her mother insisted, and rather than grieve her parent by telling her wrong, she went to the little church. She saw them walk up the aisle—she saw pretty Avice in her flowing drapery, leaning on the arm of him she had loved. Ah, such bitter memories crowded upon her then; too late she knew she had been trifled with, and Avice was the loved one. The ceremony was over, and as the crowd rushed up with congratulations, Laurie knew the "I wish you all the happiness in the world," that came from the lips of Honey as he held the little cold, trembling hand in his, was sincere. Honey went home, her young heart blighted. She didn't die of a broken heart, nor did she marry Charlie Weston for spite; but she arose early the next morning, prepared the breakfast, did the churning, and no one knew of the terrible change in her life. She was not romantic enough to nurse her love; oh, no, Honey knew better. Her love was dead, and had she lived to have seen him free, she could never have loved him again; her idol was crushed. She often met Laurie and his wife, and she soon saw a change in him. Two years afterward his face showed he was not happy. Honey was sorry for him, for she knew his wife was irritable and hard to please. Such a helpmeet will soon draw the furrows of care over the brightest face. Honey never married; she died young, and was laid to rest in the little graveyard on the hill. Avice and her husband pass the little green grave sometimes. Avice murmurs, "I do hate to pass graveyards, I'm so afraid of seeing something." But Laurie is always silent when he nears the green spot. Does he think of her, of Honey, who sleeps under the little white slab? Would he undo the past if he could? Does he regret it? Does he remember her great love for him, and how it was returned? Does his memory go back to the days when he was all to her—when her barque of life floated over smooth waters and he was at the helm? Does he think of her as she was in those days? or cold beneath the sod? or as an angel in the realms above? Who knows?

Answers to Correspondents.

PAY YOUR POSTAGE.—Authors and others often send us letters and manuscripts not fully paid. In these cases the Department here enforces payment of the deficiency—which we either have to pay, or to decline receiving the letters or manuscripts. Authors will also bear in mind that the Department now requires letter postage on all manuscripts—therefore it is often cheaper, as it is always safer, to send large packages by express.

WE cannot undertake to answer questions relating to the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts in this column. And there is no occasion of writing to ask whether we will examine a manuscript. Send it on, and we will examine it; keeping a copy, to avoid all danger of loss—as we do not hold ourselves responsible for the safe return of manuscript.

EVO, (Hayfield, Pa.,) inquires: "1st. Can you give me the origin of the expression, 'In spite of his teeth?' 2d. What is the Vatican, of which we see occasional mention in the newspapers? 3d. Who was the author of the couplet—

'A modest, sensible and well-bred man
Will not insult me, and no other can?'"

1st. This is said to be the origin of the saying:—King John, of England, once demanded of a Jew the sum of ten thousand marks, and on being refused, ordered that the Israelite should have one of his teeth drawn out every day until he yielded to the king's demand. He submitted to the loss of seven, and then paid the required sum, and hence the expression "In spite of his teeth." 2d. It is the ancient palace of the Pope at Rome. 3d. William Cowper, the English poet.

E. A. W., (Belvidere, Iowa,) writes: "1st. I have been a constant reader of your paper for nearly three years, and this is the first time I have had to seek your advice. I have a friend who has been married sixteen years, but her husband has never provided for the family; she having worked for the public fifteen years, has accumulated property which is worth about $10,000. If she should die, would the husband have an equal share of the property with the children—there being three children, aged 12, 16 and 18, respectively? Or could the wife will everything to the children, giving the husband nothing? She does not want to have her husband have a cent of her money, as he would squander it all in less than one year. One more question. 2d. I was engaged to a nice young man four years ago, when I was only fourteen. Since then I have seen other young men, and have seen one that I love better than my old lover. What shall I do? marry my old lover when I don't love him, or marry the other one whom I love, and whom I know loves me? And what do you think of my writing?" 1st. Let the wife procure the services of a good lawyer at once to draw up a will in proper form as much in favor of her children as may be. In Iowa the husband has the same rights *at decease* as the wife. But she may dispose of her real estate as she may choose. Her separate property, and rents and incomes therefrom, are not liable for his debts. Her personal property does not immediately vest in her husband, but she must keep it under her control, or it may be conveyed by him to third parties acting in good faith and without knowledge of true ownership. 2d. Under no circumstances marry a man you do not love. Your handwriting is pretty fair.

A FRIEND, (Atlanta, Ga.,) whose signature we cannot make out, writes: "Please do me the favor to answer the following questions: 1st. I am getting up a collection of postal cards. I have one from Canada, Germany, Romania, Sweden and others; now can you inform me where postal cards were first issued, and by whom? 2d. Can you also inform me where I can buy a coin book—a good one that tells all about the different coins? What will it cost? 3d. What is the most illustrated paper in the world?" 1st. Postal cards were issued in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland the first day of October, 1870, and we believe the system originated there. Other countries have been quick to adopt the convenience. 2d. There are many such works in existence, not less than three thousand having been produced on the subject of numismatics. It is difficult to choose from such a mass. Snowdon's description of ancient and modern coins is good; Akerman's Coins and Coinage also. We do not know the price of either book. Almost any bookseller would procure a work on the subject for you. The Manual of Coins and Bullion, by Eckfelt and Du Bois, Assayer U. S. Mint, might suit you. An exhaustive work, issued from a Vienna publishing house, embraces nine volumes. 3d. We do not know.

CONSCIENCE, (Pleasant Valley,) writes: "1st. If evil thoughts enter the mind, which we endeavor unsuccessfully to cast out, but give them no entertainment, have we thereby sinned? 2d. Is a sinful thought as bad as a sinful action? That is, if a person had fully resolved to do a wrong, but lacked opportunity afterward to commit it, is the offence the same in the sight of Heaven?" 1st. Without entering into elaborations on this subject, for which we have not room here, we answer no. The purest minds are sometimes invaded by evil thoughts; but if instantaneous and earnest effort is made to eject them, even if the foul presence cannot be at once removed, there can be no serious sin. But beware of familiarizing the mind with them. Give them no chance for word or whisper. Bring good thoughts in to displace them. 2d. We think it probable, if the only reason the offence is not committed is lack of opportunity.

G. P. H., (Marrowbone, Ill.,) asks: "How many mints for coining gold are there in the United States, and where are they?" An act revising and amending all laws relating to the mints, assay offices and coinage of the United States was passed at the last session of Congress. It went into effect on the first of April of this year. The object and intent of the law was to consolidate all the mint and coinage acts into one ordinance, simplify the operations of the whole system, and obtain a head for the same. The different mints and assay offices authorized by the act are to be known as "the Mint of the United States at Philadelphia;" the same at San Francisco, Cal.; Carson, Nev.; Denver, Col.; the U. S. Assay Office at New York; and the same at Boise City, Idaho, and at Charlotte, N. C.

E. A. S., (Addison,) asks: "1st. Where is Hubbell's Automatic Steam Washer, patented June 25th, 1878, manufactured? 2d. Is white a color? 3d. Do green paper curtains, green carpets and dress goods contain arsenic, as well as wall-paper? 4th. What do you think of my writing?" 1st. We do not know. 2d. Popularly speaking it is. Strictly speaking it is the union of all the colors. 3d. Yes, very often. Scheel's or Mitti's green is used in calico-printing, though it is a rank poison. What is worse, it has been detected in our city confectionery. Several kinds of green are innocent, but the difficulty is to tell them from the poisonous ones. 4th. It is good.

"PAT'S WIFE," (Geneva Station,) writes: "I have been a constant reader of your most excellent paper for some time, and have never yet troubled you with questions. If you will answer these, you will greatly oblige me. 1st. Who was Charlotte Temple? and was she married? 2d. Is Stokes's trial closed—and will he be hung? 3d. How are my writing and spelling? good or bad?" 1st. She was an English girl. See answer to another correspondent, in last number. 2d. It is ended, and the prisoner was sentenced to four years' imprisonment at hard labor. 3d. Both need improvement.

PRINTER, (Dalton, Ga.,) asks: "1st. How many newspapers are there in Philadelphia? 2d. What presses do you use on THE POST? 3d. How much do publishers pay per thousand 'ems' in Philadelphia? 4th. How is my penmanship for a printer?" 1st. About 140 of all kinds, other periodicals included. The number varies from time to time. 2d. The drum-cylinder. 3d. Daily papers, 50c.; afternoon, 48c.; weekly, 48c.; Sunday, 50c. 4th. Fair.

A. Z. asks: "1st. Can you give me a remedy for removing freckles? 2d. When my lover calls to see me, should I invite him to call again? 3d. Do you think it right for a young lady to kiss her future brother-in-law, if she is certain that he will become such? 4th. Will 'The Heir of Glendale' appear in book form? Where can it be bought, and at what price? 5th. How old is President Grant? What is the color of his eyes and hair? Is he handsome or homely? 6th. What do you think of my handwriting and spelling?" 1st. There is no remedy that we ever heard of that will remove them entirely. Those of long standing are very difficult to drive away. We have seen it stated that an effectual recipe in the opinion of many is the application of water in which a few rusty nails have lain for two or three weeks. Apply this night and morning with a soft rag. Horseradish grated in buttermilk forms a mixture which has some efficacy in removing freckles. 2d. It is unnecessary in most cases unless he be a very timid gentleman indeed. 3d. Ask your lover, instead of us, and take his advice. 4th. No. It can be had only in the Post. 5th. President Grant was born the 27th of April, 1822, and consequently is in the fifty-second year of his age. The color of his eyes and hair is dark brown, we believe. He is a plain, gentlemanly-looking man. 6th. Your spelling is good; your handwriting rather coarse for a lady.

A. B. C., (Philadelphia, Pa.,) writes: "1st—

'To-morrow didst thou say?
Methought I heard Horatio say to-morrow;
Go to—I will not hear of it;
'Tis a usurper who stakes his penury upon thy self,
And leaves thee naught, but—
Trash or promises.'

Will some reader of the Post tell where this occurs? I cannot find it in Hamlet. 2d. In the gallery at Fairmount Park one of the pictures is called 'A Gleam of Sunlight,' several persons in a cave or dungeon. Another entitled 'The Duke of Guelders' Cruelty to his Father,' deserves explanation. Can any one give the meaning of these subjects?" 1st. We have looked diligently through Hamlet for the quotation given; but, like yourself, did not find it. The spirit of the passage is not unlike that of portions of the play, and Horatio figures there—yet our search was fruitless. We repeat your own question, and ask some scholarly reader of THE POST to enlighten us on the subject. 2d. We cannot enlighten you. Some of our readers who have seen the pictures may be able to. The Duke of Guelders was a nobleman of Holland, but we find little concerning him in history or biography.

[Several letters are held over to be answered in our next.]